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THREE ANTI-PELAGIAN TREATISES

OF

S. AUGUSTINE.

THREE

Anti-Pelagian Treatises

OF

S. AUGUSTINE

VIZ.

DE SPIRITU ET LITTERA, DE NATURA ET GRATIA

AND DE GESTIS PELAGII

TRANSLATED

WITH ANALYSES

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PREFACE.

THE treatises of S. Augustine here translated are those which are appointed to be studied in connexion with the Doctrine of Grace, in the Oxford Honour School of Theology.

As a rule, the text of the Benedictine edition has been followed; most of the variations from it are noted in the margin. Where the text permits, Scripture quotations are rendered in the familiar words of the Authorized Version, and an uniform translation is adopted for each passage wherever it occurs.

It is hoped that the short introductions and analyses may be of some use in shewing the course of the argument.

The translators wish to take this opportunity of thanking several friends for suggestions and kind assistance.

THE SPIRIT AND THE LETTER.

INTRODUCTION.

Object.

The object of this treatise was to prove that man's justification, or the attainment of righteousness, is the work of the Spirit acting in the heart and inspiring love for God and His commandments; and not of the law which kills by promoting transgression, and so was designed by God to lead men to grace; nor of free choice, which of itself is powerless not only to effect righteousness, but even belief.

Occasion.

The immediate occasion of writing it was the necessity of defending a statement previously made in a work written to Marcellinus, that sinlessness was possible even though there is no instance of it in the whole of human history. This statement S. Augustine defends by saying that sinlessness is God's work, and therefore possible through the Spirit without an instance. From this he goes on to contrast, in various ways, the work of the Spirit with the work of the moral law, laying the foundation of the contrast in the words of 2 Cor. iii. 6, but proving his point chiefly by discussions on passages from the Epistle to the Romans and one from Jeremiah. This leads him to investigate the action of the human will in the process of justification. Throughout the treatise he refers to the false tenets of Pelagius and his supporters, though he never mentions him by name.

Method.

*GENERAL DIVISIONS.**

A. 1-7. Introductory, explaining occasion and object of the work.

B. 8-32. Contrast between the work of the letter or moral law and that of the Spirit shewn:—

i. by a discussion (in whole or part) of

a. 9-12. Rom. v. 20—vi. 11.

b. 13. Rom. ii. 17-29.

c. 14-22. Rom. iii. 20-27.

* The arrangement of this subject by S. Augustine seems due rather to the natural sequence of thought, than to any predetermined plan. Any attempt, therefore, to divide the book into headings of this sort must necessarily be imperfect and more or less artificial.

ii. 23-25. by proofs that the letter which killeth is the moral, not the ceremonial law,

iii. 26-32. and especially by contrast between the Old Covenant and the New with respect to the law.

C. 33-42. This contrast between the Old Covenant and the New enlarged upon by discussion of the prophecy of Jeremiah (xxxi. 31-34).

D. 43-49. This contrast not contradicted but confirmed by either of the two interpretations of Rom. ii. 14, 15.

E. 50-51. Re-statement of what has been already proved.

F. 52-60. Discussion on the relation of the human will to Divine grace.

G. 61-66. Conclusion, recapitulating the occasion and aims of the treatise, with further discussions of the nature of Appendices in 64 and 65.

ANALYSIS.

A. 1. The statement that sinlessness in man is possible, although there is no instance of it, is not absurd; because Scripture gives many examples of things being possible which have never happened.

2. The objection that these Scripture examples refer to works which God only can do is true, but the sinlessness of man, though manifested in human action, is also a work of God only.

3. It would not, however, be a serious error to maintain that there have been instances of sinlessness in this life, if (1) these instances can be alleged, and (2) the texts of Scripture, which seem to assert the contrary, can be fairly explained otherwise.

4. But it would be a most serious error to assert that such sinlessness was attained, either (1) without God's help by sheer force of will, or (2) with God's help only in the sense that free choice and the moral law that guides it, are His gifts.

5. The help of God means beyond these that He gives the Holy Spirit, Who works in the soul delight in, and love for, God the perfect good. Free choice is useless without knowing the way of truth, and that again is useless without the Holy Spirit to enable us to love it.

6. The moral teaching without love is "the letter that killeth," but it is the Spirit Which giveth life. (For to this 2 Cor. iii. 6 refers, and

not only to the fact that in some cases we should reject the literal, in favour of the mystical, meaning of Scripture.) For the law, although good, by forbidding man's sinful desire increases its force, until by sinful action it kills him, unless the Spirit change such desire into love.

7. A fuller consideration will show that this is the better interpretation of this passage (2 Cor. iii. 6), and we shall then see that a good life is the work of God, although He does not exclude the co-operation of man's will; and that, as being in His power, a good life is possible, although in His wisdom He has allowed no instance of it.

B. 8. This passage must be understood in the light of the epistle to the Romans.

I. *a.* 9. First proof from Rom. v. 20—vi. 11. The law was given that sin might abound, *i.e.*, to make man conscious of his sickness, that he might be ready to accept the healing power of God.

10. This help is described mystically under the terms of our Lord's Suffering and Resurrection, and is obtained through faith in Him.

11. This thought does not lead to the fatal sin of self-confidence, but to trust in God, the fountain of all life and righteousness.

12. Such trust is the great characteristic of S. Paul who, out of gratitude for God's mercy to himself and fearless of being misunderstood, always insisted upon it, especially in the Epistle to the Romans.

b. 13. Again in Rom. ii. 17-29 he describes the condition of those under the law, in contrast with that of those under grace, as being a state of boasting in self and of wrath, in contrast with a state of boasting in God for spiritual health derived from Him.

c. 14. Again in Rom. iii. 20 sqq. S. Paul begins by forestalling the objection that men do truly praise God as their justifier, when they recognise Him as the giver of the law, and says that the law justifies no one.

15. Then, anticipating the reply that, although the law does not justify, we are justified by free choice in keeping the law, S. Paul goes on to speak of the righteousness of God (by which he means God's gift to man and not the work of free choice), as manifested without any help from the law, and conferred on the believer through grace.

16. Parenthetical. This uselessness of the law as regards justifying is shown by an examination of the apparent paradox in 1 Tim. i. 8-9.

The law is of use to an unrighteous man to make him ask for grace, and is only used by one who has been made righteous by grace for the purpose of warning others.

17. Therefore, as S. Paul says, by the law of faith all boasting is excluded in both senses which the expression bears.

18-20. Parenthetical. This belief is the basis of true godliness, *i.e.*, the gratitude of the soul to God for His gifts; whereas the spirit of ingratitude, which attributes these gifts to itself, has already been the ruin of great men, as shewn in Rom. i. 14-23; where, after describing righteousness as the gift of God to faith, S. Paul proceeds to shew how ungodliness, *i.e.*, the failure to glorify, and give thanks to, God, caused many to lose the truth and become idolaters. They shew that their knowledge of the Creator without acknowledging Him was of as little use to them as the knowledge of the moral law without submission to God's righteousness.

21. The difference between the law of works and the law of faith in Rom. iii. 27 does not lie in the fact that the former is (1) ceremonial, (2) forbids sin, for (1) is only partly true of either, and (2) is true of both.

22. The real difference is that the latter by faith obtains with prayer and thanksgiving what the former enjoins by threats.

II. 23. Though S. Paul sometimes means by "the law" the ceremonial law which has passed away, yet the law which kills and cannot justify is the moral law; (*a*) because the Decalogue is almost entirely moral (and that by the "letter that kills" is meant the Decalogue may be seen (1) by a comparison of 2 Cor. iii. 6 and Rom. vii. 7, 11, 12,

24. (2) by the context of 2 Cor. iii. 6).

25. (*b*) Again the whole context of Rom. vii. 7 shews that the moral, and not the ceremonial law, is the law which kills.

III. 26. Hence the moral law creates guilt, when known but not obeyed, or, at least, not obeyed through love, the only source of good. But faith causes the soul to delight in and love the moral law, and to be gradually transformed into it by God's grace.

27. That this grace of sanctification was designed to be hidden under the old covenant and revealed in the new was implied in the symbolical character of the commandment about the Sabbath, which signified the sanctification by the Spirit.

28. There is a great resemblance between the two Covenants, for (1) the Spirit, Who is the source of grace and the fulfilment of the law, is also the finger of God Who gave the law, and (2) several circumstances in the giving of the Old Covenant point symbolically to the descent of the Holy Spirit in the new.

29. There are, however, important differences; in the one case, repelling awfulness, stony tables, its external character; in the other, attractiveness, the human heart, its internal character. For the law is love, and love is given by the Holy Spirit. But the works of love *enjoined without* are the letter that kills, love *given within* is the life-giving Spirit.

30. 31. The same comparison is to be found in passages in 2 Cor. iii.-v.

32. This being the true Christian faith, it is impious to reduce grace to the gift of the moral law.

C. 33. This contrast between the Old and New Covenants is prophesied by Jeremiah in xxxi. 31-34, the only passage in the Old Testament where the New Covenant is mentioned by name.

34. Here Jeremiah says that the Jews had not kept the Old Covenant. That was not the fault of the law, which was good and a preparation for faith, but the fault of the carnal mind. Therefore, he says, I will *complete* a New Covenant, because it is *fulfilled* in the New. 35. The one is called Old because of the guilt of the old man; the other New because of the healing of that guilt by the newness of the Spirit.

The New Covenant, Jeremiah says, is to be written in their hearts. This exactly agrees with S. Paul's language in 2 Cor. iii. which is evidently modelled on this prophecy.

36. For this New Covenant is the presence of the Holy Spirit, the giver of love and the fulfilment of the law. The old law, although containing commands of eternal obligation, only promised rewards of earthly, though symbolical, good things: the new promises the true and eternal good.

37. "For God will be their God and they His people." This promise means eternal life, which is perfect knowledge and perfect love, only partially realised here.

38. The contrast between the present and future stage of this knowledge, S. Paul compares to the knowledge of a child as distinguished from that of a man.

39. To this perfection hereafter the prophet alludes in the words, "And they shall not teach every man his neighbour," which cannot apply to this present state of imperfect knowledge.

40. "*All* shall know me," refers to all the house of the spiritual Israel, all who are called according to His purpose.

41. They shall know Him hereafter, as described in 1 Cor. xiii. 8-9. The meaning of the phrase "from the less even unto the greater of them" is doubtful.

42. Nothing is said here about the ceremonial law; the only difference is that the law will be in the hearts, and that God will be the reward. In his last words therefore Jeremiah prophesies the forgiveness of sins which prevent that communion with God.

D. 43. S. Paul says, in Rom. ii. 14-15, that the Gentiles have by nature the law written in their hearts. Are they not, then, not only better than the Jews who had it on stones, but do they not also take precedence of Christians since the Gentiles have it by nature?

44. *First Solution* of this difficulty. Perhaps the Gentiles here alluded to are the Gentiles of the New Covenant. This would appear to be the case (1) from the whole context of the passages, and (2) especially from a comparison of i. 16 and ii. 8.

45. In this case the words "doers of the law shall be justified" mean that they have been made righteous that they may do the law. Or "justified" may mean *accounted righteous*.

46. This description of Gentile Christians exactly agrees with Jeremiah's prophecy, and with S. Paul's statement in the Epistle to the Corinthians.

47. And the words "by nature" mean that the work of the Spirit is to restore man to his true nature, which has been lost through sin.

48. *Second Solution*. The text may refer to heathens who, in virtue of the uneffaced traces of the Divine Image, do some acts which we must praise. This does not affect the distinction between the Old and New Covenants, for the New re-writes that law which has not been entirely effaced, and which the law on tables could not re-write. Without this renewal such acts on the part of the heathen will be of no avail, except perhaps for the mitigation of punishment.

49. In this case the Apostle wished by the text to shew the

impartiality of God in not despising the previous working of the remnants of His Image in Gentiles who afterwards come to believe.

E. 50. 51. Therefore Christ is the only source of righteousness to the Jew and Gentile alike, *by* or *through* faith (for the meaning of both expressions is the same), as shewn by Rom. ix. 30—x. 9, where the Apostle sets forth the righteousness of the Gentiles, and the failure of the Jews, because of the presence or absence of faith. The doing of the law, and the life which follows, cannot be obtained exeept by faith which believes that we share our Lord's resurrection in spirit here (which is our justification), and in body also hereafter. In the place of the fear of the punishment of the law, faith causes hope in God and love of His commandments.

F. 52. Free choice is not made void by grace, but it only becomes free after the healing action of grace upon the believer, and so by love of righteousness keeps the law. Therefore free choice is a matter of gratitude and not of boasting.

53. But is to believe in man's power ? Power to do any action implies (1) the will (however aroused) to do that action, (2) the ability to carry that will into effect. The second of them is more strictly called power.

54. As applied to belief in God, the will to believe is in our power, for faith implies consent of the will ; but even so this power, like every other power, even that given to an evil will, comes from God ; but in giving power He does not impose any necessity.

55. What is this faith ? It is faith in God,

56. Not a faith that is afraid of Him, but which, like a son, asks for what it needs, lives in the hope of righteousness, makes the believer whole, and works by love.

57. But is the wish to believe God's gift, or the offspring of our endowment of free choice ? If the latter, believers may claim to have something which they have not received ; if the former, unbelievers may blame God for their unrighteousness. And in either case the want of universality is a difficulty.

58. Perhaps we should say that free choice is of itself a neutral faculty, which at God's call becomes the will to believe. God's will for the salvation of all does not interfere with man's free choice.

However man uses it, God's will is supreme whether for punishment or for salvation.

59. The path of salvation is described in Ps. ciii.

60. But sin, as well as the will to believe, comes from God's gift of free choice. Must not then sin, as well as the will to believe, be attributed to Him? No; for the will to believe is not attributed to God solely because of the gift of free choice, but because He gives the drawings and inducements without which the free choice can believe nothing. That all do not believe belongs to the unsearchable judgments of God.

G. 61-63. A concluding summary, recapitulating the occasion and object of this treatise (*cf.* §§ 1-2), viz., that sinlessness is God's work done through man and not therefore less God's. Even perfect righteousness is not impossible with God, if man has sufficient strength of will; but by God's decree is not actually realised.

64. To know the two great Christian commandments of love to God and love to our neighbour is defined by our Lord as not enough for attaining righteousness. Experience is constantly shewing us the insufficiency of our knowledge, and only a perfect knowledge of God, to be realised hereafter, can produce that perfect righteousness implied in loving with *all* the heart, &c. This ideal is set before us now, that we may know what to aim at.

65. Even if we admit the term righteousness as applicable to a lesser degree of righteousness possible in this life, with a lesser degree of love, still this lesser stage is not without sin, and needs prayer to God, both for forgiveness and that its love and righteousness may be perfected; and that all the more because the love involved in such a state implies a yearning for the higher righteousness.

66. If any suppose that there are examples of this higher stage in this life, it is impious to assert that it is by the law, and not by God's grace, that this state has been attained. That there are none we know from Scripture, not from the fact that such a thing is impossible with God, Who might so help the will as to produce in this life, not only the righteousness of faith, but the perfect and immortal righteousness of the life to come. That God does not do this belongs to His inscrutable mysteries.

NATURE AND GRACE.

INTRODUCTION.

Subject.

The subject of this treatise is, as the name implies, the true relation between nature and grace. Pelagius had identified the two in a work the object of which was to prove the possibility of sinlessness. In this work he admitted the necessity for the assistance of that which he called God's grace, but eventually explained as meaning His gifts in nature.

Occasion.

This book had considerably influenced two of S. Augustine's friends, who sent it to him to read. The following treatise is his reply. It consists of a discussion of Pelagius's arguments and authorities. The connexion between the various chapters is to be found, not in the order of thought, but in the order in which the passages under discussion were found in the work which is being criticized. S. Augustine's main contention in reply to Pelagius is that God's gifts in nature have been weakened and diseased by sin, and that they need for their restoration the grace and help which God has provided through the Incarnation. It is only by this grace of God through Jesus Christ that sinlessness is possible.

The following outline gives a rough list of the chief points of the discussion :—

1-7. Introduction. A summary of those leading features of Christian teaching about human nature and Divine grace, which Pelagius's work overlooks.

8-70. Review of the arguments of Pelagius.

8-10. "Sinlessness must be possible that God's judgment of men may be just."

11-12. "The asserter of the possibility of sinlessness is the real upholder of grace."

13-20. Discussion of minor points connected with the question of sinlessness.

21-39. "Sinlessness cannot be deemed impossible because of past sin, for sin is neither a substance nor a penal state."

40-49. "The fact of sinlessness is implied, its possibility is certainly not denied, by Scripture."

50-59. "The possibility of sinlessness rests on our possession of a necessarily inherent natural capacity, the work of a good Creator."

60-70. "Galatians v. 17 is no argument against the possibility, because the 'flesh' does not there refer to baptized people."

71-81. Review of the authorities cited by Pelagius.

82-84. Conclusion.

ANALYSIS.

1. The author of the book, in his zeal against the old error of attributing man's sin to his nature instead of to his will, is inclined to overlook God's gift of righteousness through Jesus Christ, which is necessary for all.

2. If human nature, even in its fallen state, can of itself attain righteousness, then those who by the circumstances of their lives are excluded from hearing of the Incarnation, and yet by the light of nature fulfil God's will, ought in justice to receive eternal life. But then Christ would have "died in vain."

3. It is true that man's nature was created faultless; its corruption was man's work by his own free choice, and it now cleaves to our nature as a just penalty. All our new life is the gift of Jesus Christ through His blood and is called His grace because it is given *gratis*.

4. All who do not receive this gift are justly lost because they have sin either actual or original only.

5. For the whole "lump" might justly suffer the punishment that is due; it is by God's mercy, not by their own merits, that some are saved. For this they should give Him the sincerest thanks.

6. This is the true faith according to Holy Scripture. The arguments to prove that nature needs not grace may be clever, but are not "the wisdom from above."

7. The zeal which the author feels for human nature must be met with greater zeal for Christ's cross. He probably does not see the real tendency of his argument.

8. He begins his work by insisting on the distinction between *fact* and *possibility;* he only wishes to argue for the *possibility*, and not for the *fact*, of human sinlessness, whereas he maintains that the passages of Scripture quoted against him refer only to *fact;* and that Scripture would not have blamed men if they could not have helped their condition.

9-10. But we maintain that in heathen countries infants and grown-up people cannot help dying unbaptized and yet are justly excluded from the kingdom of heaven. If he denies this, he contradicts our Lord and the Apostle, and makes the Cross of Christ of none effect.

11. He argues that his opponents are the real impugners of God's grace, because they deny the possibility of sinlessness (though as a fact they do not do so); and that he, by maintaining the possibility of sinlessness, of course admits the means by which it may be realized.

12. This sounds all that could be desired, but his illustrations from the natural powers of the body soon make us suspect the worthlessness of his admission.

13. But before touching on this a few minor points must be noticed. (1) He states that little sins, which cannot be avoided, "ought not to be blamed," forgetting that Scripture does blame them in order to make us pray for forgiveness and gradual progress in the path of perfection.

14. (2) He is right in answering a certainly irrelevant question by attributing his own sinfulness to negligence; but the consciousness of this negligence should make him seek in prayer the true Source of strength.

15. (3) There is some truth in his statement that we must not in this case insist too much upon the exact words of Scripture; and yet it is remarkable that the term "sinless," as distinct from "blameless," is used only of our Lord. (4) Nor does there seem to be any objection to his interpretation of "he that is born of God sinneth not."

16. (5) But when he makes the words "the tongue can no man tame" a question asked by way of rebuke, he is certainly wrong, as the context clearly proves. The emphasis should be put on "man," as distinguished from God, from Whom we should ask for power to tame the tongue.

17. For, as S. James goes on to say, it is only to be tamed by the wisdom which comes down from above; and this is to be obtained by prayer and not by a self-sufficient power of free choice.

18. (6) The passage "they that are in the flesh cannot please God" is certainly irrelevant as alleged against him; but the real question is whether those who live after the Spirit, do so by the grace of God or by nature and their own will.

19. (7) About sins of ignorance, he says that we must be on our guard against culpable ignorance, whereas he should have said that we ought to pray for understanding. Careless ignorance is one thing, but inability to understand our duty when we try can only be overcome by God's grace.

20. (8) He allows that man must pray for forgiveness when he has sinned, but never says that he must pray for grace to avoid sin; whereas our Lord's prayer enjoins both.

21. He maintains that "sin cannot weaken human nature, because sin is not a substance, but only the name for a wrong action." But, while this description of sin is admitted, the conclusion is contradicted by the words of the Psalmist, "Heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee," and also by the angel's words in Matt. i. 21.

22. Sin, though not a substance, is an act which separates the soul from God and therefore weakens it, just as abstinence from food weakens the body.

23. He asserts also in opposition to Scripture that weakness cannot be the punishment of sin, for it would give occasion to further sin. And he also forbids the baptism of infants and thinks that Adam's posterity are even better than he.

24. He argues that if "the weakness gives occasion to more sin, it makes punishment the cause of sin." But he forgets that the punishment is deserved and has a merciful design. The fact of such punishment is clearly stated by S. Paul in Rom. i.

25. In consequence of this mistake, he fails to see our argument that grace alone can undo what the will has done, and he misrepresents the moral character which we attribute to death and pain.

26. The death of our sinless Lord does not disprove the connexion between sin and death, for that was an act of condescension, not a necessity of His human nature.

27. The statement that "no evil can be the cause of any good" is untrue, as shown by the salutary results of punishment through the mercy of God, of which we have an instance in the Psalmist's experience.

28. We do not say that sin was necessary to cause God's mercy; but it is the inheritance of a most just and appropriate punishment. We should therefore pray for that mercy and not murmur against God.

29. The illustration to describe God's mercy which he draws from a physician's treatment of a wound is correct in so far as it allows that sin is a wound, but the Heavenly Physician not only cures, but Himself gives strength for the future to those whom He has cured.

30. On the ground that pride is sin, he objects to the view that sin was necessary to cure pride. But such a cure is no more wonderful than the cure of pain by pain.

31. It is true that God is able to cure all things, but by this means it is His will to cure pride, as shewn by the example of S. Paul; indeed it is particularly suitable because of the peculiar character of that sin.

32. A similar paradox is to be seen in the case of the man delivered over to Satan, and also in many medical remedies.

33. His argument that every sin is pride contradicts the distinction in the law between pride and other sins, and overlooks the association of pride with even our best acts. What is true is that pride was the beginning of sin.

34. He objects that "man cannot be held responsible for a sin which is necessary and therefore not his own"; but it is his own, and therefore he should pray to have it healed.

35. We must confess that we do not know why God does not at once cure this subtle sin of pride before the great day which will

destroy it altogether. But meanwhile we must trust in His preventing and following grace, humbly committing our way to the Lord.

36. Otherwise we are constantly liable to pride even when walking in God's way.

37. His opponents were certainly wrong in maintaining that sinlessness would make a man equal to God.

38. He is right in asserting that humility must be on the side of truth; but it is just on this principle that the Apostle forbids us to say that we have no sin.

39. While extolling our Creator, he forgets that the same God is also our Saviour, Who not only forgives the past, but also helps us for the future.

40. The true reason why the sins of good men are recorded in Scripture is not to make us despair of goodness, but to prevent despair when we sin.

41. For though they died without sin, yet it was by means of the daily prayer for forgiveness such as that which our Lord Himself taught us.

42. The Scripture characters whom he enumerates as sinless would themselves acknowledge that if they said they had no sin they would deceive themselves: and it is certain that humility is on the side of truth.

43. It is absurd to suppose that because Scripture mentions the good deeds of certain people, it would also have mentioned their sins, had they committed any.

44. Nor can he maintain that the sins of such people would have been mentioned at least in early times, in Abel's case for instance.

45. For the purpose of Scripture was only to give instances. Many things are obviously omitted, and we cannot but believe that Abel committed some petty sins which might have led to great sins. Though called righteous, Abel was not sinless.

46. The author's principle of believing what he reads in Scripture and not adding to it, is all very well. It is a pity though that he does not adhere to it; for Scripture says that there is only one Name by Which we can be saved.

47. If he understands this passage to mean that man needs the

gospel to teach him how to live, he must at least acknowledge the miserable darkness which needs such teaching. If nature or freewill can enlighten it, then the Cross of Christ is made of none effect.

48. He is wrong in arguing from Rom. v. 18, that in "All have sinned," the word "all" is not used absolutely, but only of S. Paul's contemporaries.

49. But even if taken absolutely, he says the Apostle is dealing with fact and not with possibility. The possibility of sinlessness we admit, but only as derived from the healing power of Him Who is Saviour as well as Creator.

50. He is right in saying that God, being just and good, created man so that he could avoid sin if he willed, and does not command impossibilities. But we are not now talking of man's nature as created but as corrupted; and it is by healing, and not by nature, that the impossibilities are removed.

51. The real question then is by what means sinlessness is possible. We maintain that it is only by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ, as under the Old Covenant so also now.

52. He indignantly protests that he describes sinlessness as the work of God only; and but for what follows he would seem to have been grievously maligned.

53. But he goes on to describe this possibility as God's gift because "it is a faculty, like the power of speech, dependent on nature and not on choice." This illustration, though it does not help his argument, shews the drift of his meaning.

54. He says that "a natural property, being necessary, is beyond the region of choice." But our desire for happiness and God's holiness are instances to prove the contrary.

55. He adduces illustrations from our senses of sight, sound, and smell; none of which are to the point.

56. Equally untrue is his conclusion that "the avoidance of sin depends on ourselves, but the possibility of sinlessness belongs to our nature." This would have been untrue even of unfallen man; much more of us in our present corrupt state.

57. His two further deductions from this double statement are

equally absurd, for we are not always at liberty in the exercise of a natural property, and some natural properties are alienable.

58. He maintains that "no act of will can destroy this inseparable possibility of nature." S. Paul, on the contrary, represents man's will as striving in vain to attain sinlessness.

59. In self-defence he argues that "the possibility of sinlessness, belonging as it does to the nature which God made, is therefore the work of His grace." Now it is clear that he means by God's grace an inalienable natural possibility. This contradicts the Apostle's words about himself, and never existed even in unfallen man.

60. He says that "the flesh is not contrary to the baptized, who are not in the flesh." This statement is a surrender of the defence of nature, which even the unbaptized possess.

61. And it is untrue even of the baptized, for it is to them that S. Paul refers when he says that the flesh is contrary; and its opposition shews itself in their not being able to do the things that they will.

62. The grace, which he by his silence implicitly denies, is not that of creation, but of salvation; and for this man must daily pray that he may conquer the law of sin in his members.

63. It is true that by "flesh," S. Paul here means not the material flesh, but the works of the flesh; and that both flesh and spirit are the works of a good Creator, and therefore good. It is the corruption of nature which makes the flesh contrary to the spirit.

64. His argument about the work of a good Creator is fatal to his previous admission that the flesh is contrary to an unbaptized person. He must either retract this admission or allow the necessity of grace to heal corrupted nature.

65. And when nature cries to be delivered from the body of this death, she shews her need of liberty from the corruptions of nature and her inability to deliver herself. Forgiveness for the past is not sufficient; strength for the future is also necessary.

66. If he will only allow that the unbaptized need this saving grace, it is no slight admission.

67. But the baptized also have the flesh contrary to them—even though they are guided by the Holy Spirit and therefore are not under the law.

68. So that while thanking God for past healing, we must pray for further progress towards perfection, resisting the devil, as he says, but by God's power, not by our own.

69. And his argument for the possibility of sinlessness from all men wishing to be without sin is good, if he would only confess that this is to be attained by the grace of God through Jesus Christ alone. If he believes in this grace, it would have been easy to allude to it.

70. Even supposing that there have been instances of sinlessness in this life, in spite of what Scripture seems to say, it is quite certain that it is only by the grace of Christ that either absolute perfection or any progress in righteousness can be attained.

71. His quotations from Catholic writers are of no assistance to him. (1) The two passages from an unnamed author are vague and of doubtful orthodoxy with regard to our Lord's human nature.

72. (2) The two passages from S. Hilary only prove the possibility of being pure in heart, but do not say that this is possible without the grace of the Saviour. The righteousness of Job, of which S. Hilary speaks, is not said to be perfect or sinless; it was the gradual advance in the conflict with evil desires.

73. In fact Job elsewhere confessed his sinfulness; and S. Hilary, like S. John, says distinctly that no one is without sin.

74. (3) The quotation from S. Ambrose belongs to a passage where he has been insisting on the possibility of sinlessness, but does not say that it is possible without the grace of Christ, which was given to believers even before the Incarnation. Besides Bishop Ambrose in his hymn bids us pray for the Holy Spirit.

75. And in another passage of the book from which the quotation is taken, he insists that the will is prepared by God, and in the immediate context of the quotation he states that the spotlessness of the Church was not from the beginning, but will be perfected only in a future life.

76. (4) The quotations from John, Bishop of Constantinople, are not denied by anyone, but they have nothing to do with man's present condition or with the need of the grace of Jesus Christ.

77. (5) The passages quoted from Xystus, to show the desirability of purity and sinlessness, which are described as the objects of the gift of

free will, do not deny the grace of God to be the means by which at God's call the will attains these objects.

78. (6) The words of the Presbyter Jerome only state that spotless purity is to be our aim, and that we were created free from all necessity.

79. This freedom of ours is to be realized by love which is the gift of the Holy Spirit, by Whom we are delivered from the necessities which sin has imposed on our nature.

80. (7) The quotation from S. Augustine himself to the effect that sin cannot be necessary is to be understood from its context, which speaks of the grace of God, which, by forgiving the past and giving strength for the future, makes sin unnecessary.

81. In the words that follow the quotation it is admitted that apart from grace sin is necessary, not because of nature but because of its corruptions.

82. In urging men to a good life, if they are not Christians, they must be drawn towards the faith; if they are careless Christians, we must spur them by hope and fear, not only to good deeds but also to gratitude for past help and prayer to overcome present difficulties in the way to perfection. For perfection is only possible by the grace of God through Jesus Christ.

83. It is love which makes the commandments of God neither impossible nor grievous.

84. At every step righteousness is commensurate with love, and thus whether perfected here or hereafter it is the gift of the Holy Spirit, of the grace of God through Jesus Christ.

THE ACCOUNT OF THE PROCEEDINGS AGAINST PELAGIUS.

INTRODUCTION.

Occasion.

This book was written to give an accurate account of what took place at a Council in Palestine, at which it was currently reported that the teaching of Pelagius had received full episcopal sanction.

The Council had been summoned by Eulogius, Metropolitan of Cæsarea, in consequence of an indictment which had been presented to him by Heros and Lazarus, two Gallican bishops. In this indictment the bishops, who were at that time living in Palestine, charged Pelagius, who was also in Palestine, with false teaching. It was a comprehensive document. For besides passages from well-known books and letters of which Pelagius was the reputed author, it included the charges against Coelestius at Carthage, A.D. 412, three charges which seem to give the peculiar form that the heresy took in Sicily, and also selections from a work written by Coelestius. The accusers were unable through illness to be present at the Council, and the case was heard through an interpreter, as the bishops did not understand Latin.

Object.

S. Augustine's object is to show that the bishops were quite right in acquitting Pelagius, since he gave an orthodox interpretation of every statement for which he acknowledged himself responsible, and openly condemned all the other statements, including the main points of Pelagian error. At the same time he charges Pelagius with quibbling, with self-contradiction, with disingenuousness in the manner in which he obtained his acquittal, and with deliberate falsehood in the accounts which he had circulated purporting to describe what took place at the Council.

It was of supreme importance to S. Augustine that he should shew that the Catholic Church was not in conflict with itself on the question of man's absolute need of the grace of God through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

ANALYSIS.

1. S. Augustine had waited for the authorized minutes of the Palestinian council before attempting to point out the true value of their decision.

2-4. First count—"No one can be without sin who has not the knowledge of the law." The explanation of Pelagius, that the knowledge of the law helps man not to sin, is quite a different statement, and is ambiguous.

5-8. Second count—"All are governed by their own will." The explanation that the will is free, though helped by God when it chooses good, is weaker than the original statement, the heretical meaning of which is shewn by the passage from which it was taken.

9-11. Third count—"In the day of judgment, the wicked and the sinners will not be spared, but will be burned with eternal fire." This was explained as a statement on the authority of our Lord, and as an attack on Origen's universalism. But he certainly did not mention the sinners who will be saved, though as by fire.

12. Fourth count—"Evil must not even enter the thoughts." This he explains as a maxim and not as an assertion.

13-15. Fifth count—"The kingdom of heaven was promised also in the Old Covenant." Pelagius, in his explanation, availed himself of the ambiguous meaning of the words the "Old Covenant" to defend a statement which was undoubtedly objectionable.

16-22. Sixth count—"Man can be without sin if he wishes," and also some flattery in a letter implying perfect sinlessness. Pelagius denied that the passages were written by him and anathematized the writers as being foolish, not as heretical,—a distinction which does not really hold good. With regard to the other part of the charge, he asserted that he meant that man could be without sin by God's grace; but he did not define what he meant by God's grace. The bishops thought only of the grace of God through Jesus Christ; Pelagius may have meant the gifts of nature only.

23-26. Seventh count, consisting of the charges against Coelestius at the Council of Carthage and some other assertions quoted from a letter from S. Hilary to S. Augustine. Of these Pelagius repudiated all but two, anathematizing all who "hold or ever held them." Thus he anathematized the most pernicious of the errors that had given so much trouble. One of the others was repeated from a previous count, and in the other he explained the statement that "there had been sinless men before the coming of Christ," to mean that men had lived "holy and righteous lives" before His coming, a statement which is in itself quite unobjectionable, but is not equivalent to that which it is supposed to explain.

27-28. Eighth count—"The Church here is without spot or wrinkle." This is a position held also by the Donatists, and would exclude from the Church all who say "forgive us our trepasses." Pelagius explained it to mean that the Church was made spotless in baptism and the Lord willed it to remain so. This is obviously true, but he said nothing about the Church during the period between its first cleansing and its final perfection.

29. Ninth count—"We do more than is commanded in the Law and the Gospel." He explained this as referring to the observance of celibacy. It is true that celibacy is not commanded, but the observance of it does not imply that every commandment has been fully kept.

30-31. Tenth count, containing several other passages from a work by Coelestius, which Pelagius repudiated and anathematized. These anathemas seem to fix an orthodox meaning upon his explanations of the sixth, first, and second counts.

32-41. Eleventh count—"Any one man may possess all virtues and graces." Pelagius explained it to mean, "God gives all graces to the man who is worthy, as He gave them to S. Paul." But (1) it is not true that S. Paul possessed all graces. The graces of the human Body and Soul of the Word of God and also of the whole of His mystical body exceed those possessed by any one of the members of that mystical body. (2) S. Paul did not receive the graces that he possessed because of his being worthy either from his works or from his faith. He was himself the first to confess that he had received all from the grace of God. This Pelagius had admitted at the synod of

Jerusalem, although it is denied by implication in a published commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, which is reported to be written by him. (3) Pelagius had in the tenth count anathematized the worthiness which he here asserts. The judges must have failed to notice the word, or must have supposed that it was used in some correct sense, as his preceding explanations had sounded so satisfactory.

42-43. The other charges Pelagius repudiated, and joined with the bishops in anathematizing them.

44. The Council gave its decision that Pelagius held the godly doctrines and anathematized what is contrary to the faith.

45. It was a sorry acquittal to rejoice over. The judges were quite right, for they decided on the facts as set before them, in the absence of the accusers. But those who knew Pelagius's teaching in the past must feel his want of sincerity on the present occasion.

46-49. S. Augustine describes his knowledge of Pelagius and his teaching in the past, and how two of Pelagius's followers had been brought back to the true faith, acknowledging their error, and charges Pelagius with meanness in practically including them in his anathemas.

50-53. The friendly letters which Pelagius presented from many bishops including S. Augustine himself no doubt admit of explanation. As for his own letter, S. Augustine shews how carefully he had selected all the expressions contained in it so as to set forth the true faith.

54-58. The conduct of Pelagius after the Council increased the suspicion of his insincerity. For he sent a garbled account of the proceedings to a friend of his, in which he says that the bishops had approved of his statement that a man could *easily* be without sin and keep God's commandments, inserting "easily" and omitting "by the grace of God." And to S. Augustine Pelagius sent an account which omitted all his anathemas in the seventh and final charges, so as to make it appear that neither he nor the bishops had expressed any opinion about them.

59. S. Augustine appeals to Aurelius to make these facts known, because it is supposed that the bishops had given their approval to Pelagius's teaching. The opposite is really true: the decision of the bishops, while acquitting Pelagius, condemned his heresy.

60-65. Proof of this statement. The Council decided (1) that Pelagius held godly doctrine; this is proved from his answers to the first, second, third, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and eleventh charges, in all of which he carefully avoids all false teaching. (2) That he anathematized what is contrary to the faith. This is proved by his anathemas to a part of the seventh, and the whole of the tenth and last charges. And in these anathemas the judges concurred and thus condemned the evil teaching of this new heresy.

66. An audacious attack had been made on the monastery and convent of S. Jerome. It was for the local bishops to punish such ungodly deeds; but ungodly teaching must be attacked by the whole Church, which is thereby endangered.

THE SPIRIT AND THE LETTER.

1. I lately wrote two works addressed to you, my dear son Marcellinus, concerning the Baptism of Infants and the Perfection of Man's Righteousness, in which I said, "It seems that no one in this life either has attained or will attain to that perfection, with the exception of the one Mediator, Who bore all that belongs to man in the likeness of the flesh of sin, but entirely without sin." Having read these, you wrote back to me that you were perplexed by my saying in the last of the two books that it was possible that a man might be without sin, by the help of God, if his will were not lacking; while nevertheless there never has been, nor will be, any one who has attained that perfection so long as he lives here, save the One in Whom all will be made alive. It seems to you absurd to say that anything is possible of which there is no example. Now you would agree, I am sure, that it never has happened that a camel has gone through the eye of a needle, and yet Christ said that even this is possible with God. We read, too, that twelve thousand legions of angels might have fought for Christ, to prevent His suffering, and yet that it did not happen; we read that the nations might have been at once exterminated from the land which was given to the children of Israel, but that God

Matt. xix. 24-26.

Matt. xxvi. 53. So many Latin Cursives and Fathers.

wished that it should happen by degrees; and six hundred other things we might think of, which we must confess might have happened, or might happen, even though we could not produce examples of their having actually done so. Therefore we ought not to say that it is impossible for man to be without sin, merely on the ground that there is no man in whom we can show that that perfection has been realised, save Him who is not only man but also by nature God.

2. To this, perchance, you may reply, that the things which I have mentioned as possible, though they have not actually happened, are works of God; but for man to be without sin pertains to the work of man himself, and the realisation of full and perfect and absolutely complete righteousness is his best work; if therefore this work can be fulfilled by man, we ought not to suppose that there neither has been, nor is, nor will be, any one who has fulfilled it. But you ought to consider that, though the doing of the work pertains to man, yet this too is a gift of God, and therefore to agree without hesitation that it is a work of God.

Phil. ii. 13. "For it is God which worketh in you," says the Apostle, "both to will and to work for His good pleasure."

3. Those, therefore, do not much harm who say that man lives or has lived here altogether without sin; and they should be urged to prove their view if possible. For if any one could convince us that the passages of Scripture in which I think it is clearly laid down that no man while he lives here, although he uses free choice, is found without sin, ought to be understood in other than their

Ps. cxliii. 2. natural sense—such a passage, *e.g.* as "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man

living be justified," and others of a similar purport—and if he could show that some one or more have lived here without any sin, if he could do this, then the man who does not, I will not say merely refrain from angry feelings, but who does not congratulate him warmly, must be afflicted with no small degree of envy. For even though, as I am inclined rather to believe, there is not, nor ever has been, nor will be, one who has reached such a perfection of purity, and yet some one maintains and believes the contrary, there is, as far as I can judge, no great or deadly error, since good nature is the cause of the mistake. It must be understood, however, that the man does not believe himself to be the person who has attained to perfection, except on the most certain and well-founded conviction.

4. But they ought to be opposed with the greatest earnestness and vehemence who think they can either have perfect righteousness or be attaining to it by perseverance through the sheer force of man's will without God's help. When once pressed to explain how it is that they presume to assert that this happens without God's succour, they stop short, and dare not give utterance to such a statement, knowing how impious and intolerable it is, but give the following reasons why righteousness is not effected without God's help. They say that it is because God created man with the free choice of his will; and because, by giving commandments, He teaches how man should live; and because He helps him undoubtedly, in that by teaching He takes away his ignorance, so that man knows what he should avoid and what he should aim at in his works; and in this way, through the power of free choice implanted in him by nature, by treading

upon the road pointed out to him, by sober, righteous, and godly living he may be deemed worthy to attain to that blessed and eternal life.

5. But when we, on the other hand, assert that man's will is assisted by God to effect righteousness, we mean that, beyond the fact of man's creation with the free choice of his will, and beyond the teaching which instructs him how to live, he receives the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit produces in his mind the delight and love of that highest and unchangeable good which is God, even in this present life, while he still walks by faith and not by sight; that, having been given this earnest as it were of the free gift, he may burn to abide in the Creator, and may be inflamed to attain communion with that true light, so that he may derive well-being from Him from Whom he derives his being. For free choice is of no avail except to sin, if the way of truth is unknown; and when a man begins to know what to do and what to strive for, he does it not, he begins it not, he lives not well, unless it is also the object of his delight and love. To produce this affection is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, not by free choice which springs from ourselves, but by the Holy Spirit Which is given unto us.

2 Cor. v. 5. Eph. i. 14.

Rom. v. 5.

6. Now that teaching, by which we are commanded to live a sober and righteous life, is the "letter that killeth," unless there be present "the Spirit Which giveth life." For we ought not to understand the passage "the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life," as meaning only that we should not give a literal interpretation to an expression which is figurative, of which the natural meaning is absurd; but perceiving some other meaning should nourish the inner man by spiritual understanding, because "to be

2 Cor. iii. 6.

carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." As though a person were to understand carnally much which is written in the Song of Songs, not as referring to the fruit of an enlightened love, but to the affection of sinful lust. Rom. viii. 6.

This is not then the only way in which we should understand the words of the Apostle, "the letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life"; but also in another, and that a far more important way, which he shows quite plainly by another passage: "I did not know desire had not the law said Thou shalt not desire." And a little later he says "Having taken occasion, sin through the commandment deceived me, and through it killed me." There we see the meaning of "the letter killeth." And certainly in the words "Thou shalt not desire" there is nothing figurative which is not to be taken literally, but it is a very plain and healthful precept, and if a man fulfils it, he will have no sin at all. For the Apostle chose this general maxim, in which he included all the rest, as though the words "Thou shalt not desire" were the voice of a law prohibiting all sin, for no sin at all is committed except by desire. The law therefore which enjoins this is a good and excellent law. But where the Holy Spirit helps not, inspiring good desire in place of evil desire, that is, shedding abroad love in our hearts, there indeed that law, however good, increases the evil desire by forbidding it, like a rush of water which, if not diverted from its old direction, gathers strength from the barrier placed in its way, and when once it has overcome this obstacle, dashes over in greater volume, and rushes on its downward course more violently than before. Somehow or other the very object of our desire becomes sweeter Rom. vii. 7, 11.

when it is forbidden; and this is how sin deceives by the commandment, and by it kills, when there is added also transgression which is not where there is no law.

7. But let us consider, if you please, the whole of that passage of S. Paul's epistle, and thoroughly discuss it with the Lord's help. I wish to point out, if I can, that the words of the Apostle, "the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life," do not refer to figurative expressions, though a suitable interpretation may be derived even from that sense, but rather to the law which openly forbids what is evil. When I have shewn this, it will certainly become more evident that well living is a gift of God, not merely because God has given man free choice, without which there can be neither ill nor well living, nor merely because He has given the commandment to teach man how he should live, but because by the Holy Spirit He sheds abroad love in the hearts of those whom He foreknew in order to predestinate, predestinated to call, called to justify, justified to glorify. When I have made this clear, you will see, I think, that it is not to the point to say that those things are only possible, though unexampled, which are God's works; as the instance we gave of a camel going through the eye of a needle, and any other things which are impossible with us, but easy with God. You will see that we should not maintain that man's righteousness ought not to be reckoned among such things, on the ground that it should be referred, not to God's, but to man's work, and that there is therefore no reason for supposing that its perfection is without an example, if it is possible in this life. The futility of such an argument will be clear enough, when we have made it evident that even man's righteousness

Rom. viii. 29, 30.

ought to be attributed to the operation of God, although it is not produced without man's will; and therefore we cannot deny that its perfection is possible even in this life.

For with God all things are possible, whether those things which He does by His own will alone, or those which He has ordained as possible for Himself to do with the co-operation of the wills of His creatures. And so whatever of these He does not, though it is without example in actual fact, yet the cause of its possibility lies with God and His power; the reason why it was not actually done lies in His wisdom; and if a man knows not this cause, let him not forget that he is man, nor ascribe foolishness to God, because he does not fully comprehend God's wisdom.

8. Listen, therefore, to the Apostle explaining to the Romans, and showing clearly enough that what he wrote to the Corinthians, "the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life," ought rather to be understood in the sense we have given, that the letter of the law, which teaches that we ought not to sin, killeth if the Spirit which giveth life be absent. For the law makes sin known rather than avoided, and so causes it to increase rather than diminish, because to evil desire is added also the transgression of the law.

9. Now, the Apostle, wishing to commend grace, which came by Jesus Christ to all the nations, that the Jews might not boast against other nations because of the law which they had received, began by saying that by one man sin and death had entered into the human race, and by one man righteousness and life eternal, meaning obviously by the first, Adam, by the second, Christ. Then he goes on to say, "but the law came in beside, that the trespass might abound, but where the trespass abounded, grace did much

Rom. v. 12.

Rom. v. 20.

more abound; that as sin reigned unto death, so also grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Then, as an objection to his own
Rom. vi. 1. argument, he introduces the question, "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid." For he saw that the words, "the law came in beside that the trespass might abound, but where the trespass abounded, grace did much more abound," might be perverted by perverse readers, as though he had meant that sin was a good thing because it made grace abound. To dispose of this objection he answered, "God forbid," and went on to say, "We that are dead to sin, how shall we live therein?" That is to say, when dying to sin is the very thing which grace has bestowed upon us, what else shall we be doing but shewing ourselves ungrateful for grace, if we live therein?

For when a man praises the benefits of medicine, he does not imply that diseases and wounds which the medicine heals are good things; but the more he extols the medicine, the more he blames, and shows that he dreads, the wounds and diseases from which the medicine he so praises sets the patient free. In the same way the praise and commendation of grace is the blame and condemnation of trespasses. It was needful to point out to man the loathsomeness of his sickness, when not even the holy commandment was of any avail against his iniquity, for it increased rather than diminished it, because "the law came in beside that the trespass might abound." It was by this means that man was to be convicted and made ashamed; and so might see that he needs God not only as a teacher but also as a helper to order his steps so that no sin may

have dominion over him; and that he may be healed by taking refuge in the help of God's mercy, and that so where the trespass has abounded, grace may much more abound, not by the merit of the sinner but the help of the Succourer.

10. The Apostle next points out this healing, speaking of it mystically in terms of the suffering and resurrection of Christ, saying "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized in Christ Jesus, were baptized in His death? Rom.vi.3-11 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that like as Christ rose from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted with the likeness of His death, we shall be also of His resurrection; knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead hath been justified from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more, and death shall no more have dominion over Him. For in that He died to sin, He died once, but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." It is very clear that by the figure of our Lord's death and resurrection is here symbolised and represented the setting of our old life and the rising of the new, the abolition of iniquity and the renewal of righteousness. Whence then is this great blessing to man through the letter of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ?

11. This holy thought preserves the sons of men trusting Ps. xxxvi. 8-11.

in the protection of God's wings, so as to be inebriated with the fatness of His house and made to drink of the torrent of His pleasure; for with Him is the fountain of life, and in His light shall we see light, Who continueth forth His lovingkindness unto them that know Him, and His righteousness unto them that are of an upright heart. For it is not because they know Him, but rather that they may know Him, that He continueth forth His lovingkindness; nor is it because they are upright of heart, but that they may be upright of heart, that He continueth forth His righteousness by which He justifies the ungodly.

This thought does not elate and lead to pride, a vice which arises when a man trusts in himself and regards himself as the source of his own life. By such feelings of pride man goes back from that fountain of life, the draught of which alone gives righteousness, that is to say, a good life, and from that unchangeable light, by sharing which the reasonable soul is in a manner kindled so as to become itself too a made and created light. Just as John was a lamp burning and shining; but, recognising the source from which he shone, he said "of His fulness we have received." Whose but His, in comparison of Whom John was not light? "For that was the true light which lighteth every man when he cometh into this world." Therefore when he had said in the same Psalm "Continue Thy lovingkindness unto them that know Thee, and Thy righteousness unto them that are of an upright heart," he adds "Let not the foot of pride come to me, and let not the hand of sinners remove me. There are they fallen, all that work wickedness; they were driven out, they were not able to stand," since by the impiety, through which a

John v. 35.

John i. 16.

Ps. xxxvi. 10-13.

man attributes to himself what belongs to God, he is driven into his natural darkness, that is, works of iniquity. For these works are entirely a man's own doing, and such he is competent of himself to fulfil; but works of righteousness he does not, except so far as he receives of that fountain and that light, where is the life that needeth nothing, and where there is no changing or shadow of turning. James i. 17.

12. Therefore the Apostle (who, being originally called Saul, seems to me to have chosen the name of Paul with the express purpose of showing his littleness as the least of the Apostles), while fighting with great force and vehemence in order to commend this grace of God against the proud and arrogant and those who presumed on their own works, rightly cries out and contends in its defence, and heeds not the hostility of those who understand not a matter so deep and abstruse, and who distort the sound meaning of his words. He cares only that he may incessantly preach the gift of God, by which alone are saved the sons of promise, the sons of God's blessing, the sons of grace and lovingkindness, the sons of the New Covenant. S. Paul had good reason to do so, because in him truly had that grace been very clearly and brilliantly manifested; for, in spite of the hostility he was showing in persecuting the Church of Christ, for which he deserved the severest penalty, he received mercy instead of condemnation, and grace instead of punishment. The way in which he insists on grace is — firstly, by putting every salutation in the form, "Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"; and secondly, by making this question almost the whole subject of the Epistle to the

Romans. Indeed it is contended so fiercely and in such a variety of ways as to fatigue, it may be, the mind of the reader, but with a fatigue so beneficial and healthful as to exercise rather than to injure the members of the inward man.

13. That is the meaning of the passage I quoted above. That again is the meaning of his reproving the Jew, and saying that he is called a Jew, but in no wise fulfils what he professes. "But if thou art called a Jew," he says, "and restest in the law, and makest thy boast in God, and knowest His will, and provest things that differ, being instructed out of the law, thou art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast in the law, through transgression of the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you: as it is written, Circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law, but if thou be a transgressor of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Therefore if uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? and shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it keep the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision art a transgressor of the law? For he is not a Jew which is

Rom. ii. 17-29. So best Uncials, &c.

one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart in the spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not from men but from God." In these last words he shows what he meant by saying "Thou makest thy boast in God." For certainly if such a Jew were boasting in God in the way required by grace which is given, not for merits of works, but as a free gift, then his praise would be from God, not from men. But they were so boasting in God as if they alone had merited to receive His law, according to the words of the Psalm, "He hath not dealt so with any nation, and His judgments He hath not made manifest to them." And this law of God they were thinking to fulfil by their own righteousness, when they were rather its transgressors. Wherefore it was working wrath upon them, because sin abounded, and was committed by them wittingly.

Ps. cxlvii. 20

And besides, even those who were doing what the law commanded without the help of the Spirit of grace, were doing so from the fear of punishment, not from the love of righteousness. And so in God's sight that was not in the will, which in man's sight appeared in the act; and rather they were held guilty by God for the sin He knew they would like to commit, if they could do so with impunity. By "circumcision of the heart," on the other hand, he means a will pure from all illicit desire, which comes not by the letter which teaches and threatens, but by the Spirit Which helps. Therefore the praise of such as have this circumcision of the heart is not from men, but from God, who by His grace gives the

Ps. xxxiv. 2. Ps. xxii. 25. ground of praise, of Whom it is said "In the Lord will my soul be praised," and to Whom it is said "With Thee is my praise." They are not like those who wish God to be praised because they are men, but themselves because they are righteous.

14. "But we do praise God also," they say, "as the author of our justification, because he gave the law by study of which we know how we ought to live." But they do Rom. iii. 20. not attend to what they read: "By the law shall no flesh be justified in God's sight." For it may be in man's sight, but not in His who looks into the very heart and inmost will, whence He sees what a man would like to do if he might, even though he does otherwise from fear of the law. And lest anybody should suppose that the Apostle meant that no one is justified by that law, which in ancient symbols contains many figurative commandments, of which we have an example even in the rite of circumcision which children were commanded to receive on the eighth day, he went on at once to shew what law he meant, saying, Rom. iii. 20. "For by the law is the knowledge of sin." That law is Rom. vii. 7. therefore meant, of which he afterwards said, "I did not know sin except through the law, for I had not known desire, except the law said, Thou shalt not desire," which is the same as saying "For by the law is the knowledge of sin."

15. To this that presumption of man which is ignorant of God's righteousness and wishes to establish its own may perchance reply that the Apostle rightly said that from the law no man shall be justified, for the law only shows what should be done and what avoided, that what it has shewn the will may fulfil, and so man may be justified, not by

the command of the law, but by free choice. But, O man, listen to what follows: "But now," he says, "without the law hath the righteousness of God been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets." Has this too little sound for the deaf? "The righteousness of God," he says, "hath been manifested." This they are ignorant of, who wish to establish their own; to this they refuse to submit themselves. "The righteousness of God," he says, "hath been manifested." He did not say "the righteousness of man" or "the righteousness of one's own will," but "the righteousness of God," not that by which God is righteous, but that with which He clothes man when He justifies the ungodly. This is what is witnessed by the law and the prophets, for to this the law and the prophets bear witness: the law, by the very fact that it commands and threatens and justifies no one, shows clearly enough that it is by God's gift that man is justified by the help of the Spirit; the prophets, because what they foretold was fulfilled by the coming of Christ. For after these words he goes on to say "But the righteousness of God, through faith of Jesus Christ," that is, through the faith by which a man believes on Christ. For just as by the faith of Christ is not meant that by which Christ believes, so also the righteousness of God is not that by which God is righteous. For both the righteousness and the faith are ours, but they are said to belong to God and to Christ, because they are given us by His bounty.

Rom. iii. 21.

Rom. iii. 22.

The righteousness of God then is without the law, but has not been manifested without the law. For if it had been manifested without the law, how could it have been witnessed through the law? But it is without the law,

because God gives it through the Spirit of grace to the believer, without the help of the law, that is, though the believer has not been helped by the law. For by the law He shewed man his weakness, that taking refuge in His lovingkindness through faith he might be healed.

Prov. iii. 16, Cf. LXX. For of God's wisdom it was said, "let her carry the law and lovingkindness in her tongue," the law to make the proud guilty, but lovingkindness to justify the humbled.

Rom. iii. 22-23. It is then "the righteousness of God through faith of Jesus Christ upon all who believe. For there is no difference, for all have sinned and need the glory of God." He does not say "their own glory," for what have they which they have not received? If then they have received it, why do they boast, as though they had not received it? They need therefore the glory of God;

Rom. iii. 24. and notice what follows, "being justified freely through His grace." So it is not said "justified through the law," nor "justified through their own will," but "justified freely through His grace." Not as though it took place without our will, but our will is shown through the law to be weak, that grace may heal the will and the will once healed may fulfil the law, not having been established under the law, nor needing the law.

1 Tim. i. 9, 8. 16. For "the law was not made for a righteous man," and yet "it is good if a man use it lawfully." By putting together these two apparently contradictory statements, the Apostle advises and urges the reader to thoroughly examine and solve the question. For how is it that "the law is good, if a man use it lawfully," if what follows is also true, "knowing this, that the law was not made for the righteous man"? For who uses the

law lawfully, except the righteous man? But it was not made for him, but for the unrighteous. Can it be that even the unrighteous man ought to use the law lawfully, in order to be justified, *i.e.*, made righteous, using it as a schoolmaster to lead him to grace, as the only way by which he can fulfil what the law commands? By grace verily, he is justified freely, that is, with no antecedent merits depending on his own works; otherwise grace is no more grace. For grace is given, not because we have done good works, but to enable us to do them, or, in other words, not because we have fulfilled the law, but to give us power to fulfil the law. For it was He who said, "I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil," of Whom it was also said, "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." This is the glory which the Apostle meant when he said, "All have sinned and need the glory of God," and it is this grace of which he speaks in the words which immediately follow, "Justified freely through His grace." The unrighteous man, therefore, uses the law lawfully in order to become righteous; but when he has become righteous, he must not use it any longer as a carriage now that he has come to his journey's end, or rather, to use the above-quoted simile of the Apostle, as a schoolmaster now that he has finished his education.

Matt. v. 17.

John i. 14.

Rom. iii. 23.

Rom. iii. 24.

But how was the law not made for a righteous man, if it is necessary for a righteous man also, not to lead him as though unrighteous to justifying grace, but to be used by him lawfully when righteous? May we not say perchance, nay even certainly, that a man when

righteous uses the law lawfully when he imposes it on the unrighteous to terrify them, that, when in them too the disease of natural desire begins to increase by the incentives of restraint and by the mass of transgression, they may fly for refuge through faith to justifying grace, and, through the gift of the Spirit being ravished with the sweetness of righteousness, may evade the penalty of the letter which threatens? The two statements, therefore, will not be contrary nor mutually exclusive, that even a righteous man should use the law lawfully, and that the law should not be made for a righteous man. For he was not justified by that law, but by the law of faith, by which he believed that his weakness could in no way be assisted to fulfil the things which the law of deeds commanded, except by God's grace.

Rom. iii. 27. 17. Therefore he says, "Where then is thy boasting? It is excluded. Through what law? of works? Nay, but through the law of faith." Here he may have intended that praiseworthy boasting which is in the Lord, and meant by its being excluded, not that it was driven away so as to depart, but pressed out so as to become prominent. Just as some silver-smiths are called "beaters out." * Similarly we have that passage in the Psalms, "That they may be excluded who have been proved by silver," that is, "that they may be prominent who have been tried by the word of the Lord"; for he says in another place "The words of the Lord are pure words, silver tried by fire." Or he may have intended to speak of that vicious boasting which comes from pride, the boasting of those, I mean, who, when they fancy they

* Exclusores

Ps. lxviii. 30.

Ps. xii. 6.

are living righteously, boast as though they had not received it; that he says is excluded, *i.e.*, driven out and away, not by the law of deeds, but by the law of faith, because by the law of faith a man knows that whatever little good he has in his life, he has it by the grace of God, and that from Him alone he will obtain the power of perfection in the love of righteousness.

18. This thought makes him godly, for godliness is true wisdom, I mean that godliness which the Greeks call *θεοσέβεια*. For such is the godliness commended in the passage of the book of Job which says to man, "Behold, godliness is wisdom." *θεοσέβεια*, if we interpret it according to the origin of the word, might be translated the "worship of God"; and worship consists chiefly in the soul being grateful to Him. Wherefore, in that most true and singular sacrifice, we are admonished to "give thanks to our Lord God." But the soul would be ungrateful to Him, if she attributed to herself what comes to her from God, and above all things righteousness, and were puffed up with the works of righteousness, as though they were her own works and her own gifts to herself; not with an ordinary kind of pride, as though these gifts belonged to the class of riches or beauty or eloquence or other properties, external or internal, of the body or the mind, which even wicked people often possess; but with a would-be wisdom as though they were good qualities and the peculiar property of the good. By this vice some even great men have been driven back from the firm ground of the Divine substance, and have drifted down into disgraceful idolatry.

Job. xxviii. 28.

Wherefore the Apostle, in the same Epistle in which
Rom.i.14-17 he defends grace so eagerly, after he had said that he was debtor to Greeks and Barbarians, to wise and unwise, and therefore, as far as it was possible for him, was ready to preach the Gospel to those at Rome also, adds "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel. For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith unto faith, as it written, But the righteous lives from faith." This is God's righteousness which was veiled in the Old Testament, but revealed in the New; and it is called God's righteousness because by imparting it He makes men righteous, just as that is called God's salvation by which He saves them. And this is the faith from which and unto which it is revealed, *from* the faith namely of those who preach, *unto* the faith of those who obey. By this faith of Jesus Christ, that is, which Christ has bestowed upon us, we believe that we have from God, and will have more abundantly, the righteousness of our life. Wherefore we give Him thanks with that godliness by which He alone should be worshipped.

19. And it is natural enough that the Apostle after this sentence should turn to speak with horror of those who (light as they were, and inflated with that sin which I have just mentioned, and borne up through themselves as through empty space, where they could not rest, but must needs be broken and burst asunder) have fallen down upon figments of idols as though upon stones. For, because he had praised the godliness of faith, for justification by which we ought to be grateful to God, by way of suggesting the contrary which we should hate, he

says, "For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of those men who hold down the truth in unrighteousness. For that which is known of God is manifest in them, for God manifested it to them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse. Because when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened. Saying that they were wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into the likeness of the image of corruptible man, and birds, and fourfooted beasts and creeping things." Notice how he did not say that they were ignorant of the truth, but that they held down the truth by their unrighteousness. But because it occurred to him that it might be asked whence they could have the knowledge of the truth, to whom God had not given the law, he told us whence they could have it; for he said it was by the visible things of the creation that they arrived at the knowledge of the invisible things of the Creator, since, doubtless, so far as great minds persevered in seeking, so far they were able to find. In what, then, did their impiety consist? In that, verily, "When they had known God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their thoughts." Vanity is the natural disease of those who deceive themselves, imagining themselves to be something when they are nothing, at last overshadowing themselves with this swelling of pride, whose foot the holy psalmist prays may not come

Rom. i. 18-23.

Ps. xxxvi. 9. 11.

to him, when he said "In Thy light shall we see light," they turned aside from the very light of unchangeable truth, and "their foolish heart was darkened." For their heart was not wise, although they had known God, but rather foolish, because they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful. For God said to man, "Behold, godliness is wisdom," and thus by "saying that they were wise" (which must be understood as meaning "attributing this wisdom to themselves"), "they became fools."

20. What need to speak of what follows? The fall
James iv. 6. of those men through their ungodliness (for "God resisteth the proud"), those men, I say, who might through the creature have known their Creator, and the depths into which they sank, are better described in the verses of this epistle which follow than in any words of mine. For we have not undertaken in this work to expound this epistle; but we are striving with all our power by quotations from it to show that the help which God gives us to work righteousness consists, not in His having given us a law full of good and holy commandments, but in the fact that our will itself, without which we cannot work good, may be helped and quickened by the gift of the spirit of grace. Without this help, that teaching is "the letter which killeth," because it rather holds men guilty of transgression, than justifies the ungodly. For just as to those who knew the Creator through the creature that knowledge was of no avail to salvation, because, "knowing God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, saying that they were wise"; so those who, through the law, know how man should live, are not justified by that knowledge, because, wishing "to

establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

21. It is worth our while to consider and, if possible, give our careful attention and discrimination to, the difference between the law of deeds, *i.e.*, of works, through which that boasting is not excluded, and the law of faith through which it is. For a person might at first be inclined to say that we find the law of works in Judaism but the law of faith in Christianity, merely because the law contains the rite of circumcision and other such works, which are not now preserved in the Christian system. But we have long been trying to show, and have perhaps already succeeded in showing those who are clever in seeing differences, yourself especially and those like you, how far such a distinction is fallacious; still, since the subject is one of very great importance, we are hardly doing wrong to spend some time in adducing more and more quotations to make it plain. Now the Apostle is speaking of that law by which no one is justified, and he says, it had "come in beside that the trespass might abound"; Rom. v. 20. but lest any should on this account object to the law through ignorance or irreverence, he defends it, saying: "What then shall we say? Is the law sin? God forbid. Rom. vii, 7, 8. Nay, I had not known sin but through the law; for I had not known desire, except the law had said, Thou shalt not desire. But, having taken occasion, sin through the commandment wrought in me all desire." He also says "The law indeed is holy, and the commandment Rom. vii. 12, 13. holy and just and good; but sin, that it might appear sin, wrought death in me through that which is good." It is therefore the letter that killeth, which saith, "thou

shalt not desire," of which he says what I quoted a little
Rom. iii. 20-27. while back, "For by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now, without the law, hath the righteousness of God been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God through the faith of Jesus Christ upon all who believe. For there is no difference. For all have sinned and need the glory of God, being justified freely through His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God has set forth as a propitiation through faith in His blood, to show His righteousness on account of His purpose* with reference to sins that are past through the forbearance of God, to shew at this time His righteousness, that He may be just and the justifier of him who is of the faith of Jesus." And then he adds the words which we are now discussing, "Where then is thy boasting? It is excluded. Through what law? of deeds? Nay, but through the law of faith." The law of deeds, then, is the same as that which says "Thou shalt not desire," because through it is the knowledge of sin.

I would like, then, to know, if any one would dare to tell me, whether the law of faith does not say "Thou shalt not desire"? For if it does not, what reason is there why we should not rest in it without concern and sin with impunity? For this mistake about the Apostle's meaning was made by
Rom. iii. 8. those of whom he says, "And as some affirm that we say, let us do evil, that good may come, whose judgment is just." But if the law of faith also says "Thou shalt not desire," as so many precepts in the Gospels and Epistles testify and

* Propositum, with D-lat, &c., probably from προθεσιν for παρεσιν.

assert again and again, why is not it too called a law of deeds? For although it has not the works of those ancient symbols, circumcision and the like, still what it has, contained in symbolical rites, suitable to the present time, are nevertheless works. Nor indeed was there any question of the works of symbolical rites. For the reason why the law was mentioned was because through it was the knowledge of sin, and therefore from it is no man justified. Therefore it is not through this law that boasting is excluded, but through the law of faith, from which the righteous man lives.

But does not the law of faith, too, cause the knowledge of sin, since it also says "Thou shalt not desire"? 22. I will then briefly show what the difference between them is. What the law of works commands by threatening, the law of faith obtains by believing. The first says "Thou shalt not desire"; the second "When I perceived that no one can restrain himself unless God gives it, and that was a point of wisdom also to know whose gift this was; I went unto the Lord and besought Him." That is the wisdom which is called godliness, by which the Father of lights is worshipped, "from Whom is every best gift and every perfect gift." And He is worshipped with "the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving." So that His worshipper glories not in himself but in Him. And so by the law of works God says "Do what I command," by the law of faith man says to God "Give what thou commandest." For the law commands in order to enjoin what faith must do, that is, in order that the man who is commanded, if he cannot yet do it, may know what to ask for. But if he can at once do it and does it obediently, he still ought to know by whose gift he has the power.

Wisd. viii. 21

James i. 17,

1 Cor. ii. 12. "For we have received not the spirit of this world," says that most constant preacher of grace, "but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." Now what is the spirit of this world but the spirit of pride? By this spirit was the foolish heart darkened of those who did not glorify as God the God they knew, by being thankful. And it is by the same spirit that they are deceived, who, being "ignorant of God's righteousness and wishing to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Whence it seems to me that he is more truly a son of faith, who knows from whom to hope for what he has not yet, than he who attributes to himself what he has. But that man is better than either of these, who both has, and knows from Whom he has; provided only he does not believe himself to be what he is not yet, lest he fall into the fault of the Pharisee who, although he thanked God because of what he had, yet asked not for anything to be given him, as though he needed nothing to increase or perfect his righteousness.

Luke xviii. 11, 12.

Having therefore considered and discussed this question according to the power which God vouchsafes to give us, we gather that man is not justified by the precepts of a good life, * but only by the faith of Jesus Christ, that is, not by the law of works but by that of faith, not by the letter but by the Spirit, not by the merits of deeds but by free grace.

Gal. ii. 16.

23. Now it is true that in rebuking and correcting

* So R. V. marg. This meaning seems here decided by the context.

those who were being persuaded to practice circumcision, the Apostle seems to call by the name of the law that rite itself, and other legal observances of a similar kind, which, as shadows of the future, are now rejected by Christians, because they hold what was figuratively promised through those shadows. Nevertheless, when he said that "by the law no man is justified," he did not mean only that law contained in symbolical rites, with figures of the future promises; but also that contained in the works which constitute a righteous life: and to these belongs the command "Thou shalt not desire." To make our meaning plainer, let us look at the Decalogue itself. For verily Moses received the law which he was to minister to the people on the mountain, written with the finger of God upon tables of stone. This law is comprised in ten commandments, in which there was no order given about circumcision or animal sacrifices, which are no longer offered by Christians. Now, among those ten commandments, I should like to ask whether there is any, excepting the keeping of the Sabbath, which ought not to be observed by Christians, whether that against making and worshipping idols and any other gods except the one true God, or that against taking the name of God in vain, or that about paying honour to parents, or those about avoiding fornication, murder, theft, false witness, adultery, or the desiring of another man's goods. Which of these will any one say a Christian need not keep? Or can it be, perchance, that the Apostle does not mean by the "letter that killeth" the law which was written upon the two tables, but that of circumcision and other ancient, but now abolished, symbols? But how shall we

think so, when the precept "Thou shalt not desire" is one of the laws of the two tables, "through which law," he says, though "holy, just, and good, sin deceived me, and, through it, killed me"? And is not that "the letter killeth"?

24. And it is still more evident from the passage itself in the Epistle to the Corinthians, in which he says, "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life," that he means no other letter but the Decalogue itself written
2 Cor. iii. 2-9 on the two tables. For he says as follows: "That ye are an epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. And such confidence have we through Christ to Godward, not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God, Who hath made us able ministers of the New Covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit. For the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death engraven in letters upon stones was in glory, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance, which glory is done away, how shall not rather the ministration of the Spirit be in glory? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more shall the ministration of righteousness abound in glory."

There is much I might say about these words, but afterwards perhaps I shall have a better opportunity. At present, however, I want you to consider what letter is here meant by "the letter that killeth," with which the Apostle contrasts "the Spirit that giveth life." Surely

it is that ministration of death engraven in letters of stone, and the ministration of condemnation; for "the law came in beside, that the trespass might abound." Yet however those precepts themselves are so useful and healthy to the doer that, unless a man does them, he cannot have life. Can it really be then that, on account of that one commandment therein enjoined concerning the Sabbath, the Decalogue is called "the letter that killeth," meaning that whoever now literally observes that day is carnally minded and to be carnally minded is death, and that those nine commandments, which we do right to observe literally, ought to be regarded as pertaining, not to the law of works by which no one is justified, but to the law of faith by which the righteous man lives? Who would be so absurd as to suppose that the expression "the mininistration of death engraven in letters of stone" does not imply a reference to all the ten commandments, but that only which refers to the Sabbath? What then becomes of the passages "The law worketh wrath; for where no law is, there is no transgression" and "Until the law sin was in the world, but sin was not reckoned when there was no law," and that which we have so often quoted, "Through the law is the knowledge of sin," and that especially, in which our point is most clearly expressed, "I had not known desire, save the law said, Thou shalt not desire?"

Rom. iv. 15.

Rom. v. 13

Rom. iii. 20.

Rom. vii. 7.

25. Now study the whole context of this last passage and see whether he says anything with a view to circumcision or the Sabbath or any other symbol which is but a shadow, and does not speak with the one sole object of showing that the letter which forbids sin does not

give man life, but rather kills him by increasing desire, by heaping up iniquity through transgression, unless grace set him free through the law of faith which is in Christ Jesus, when "love is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which is given unto us." For when he had said "That we should serve in newness of the spirit, not in the oldness of the letter," he adds, "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I did not know sin, except through the law. For I had not known desire except the law said, Thou shalt not desire. But having taken occasion, sin through the commandment wrought in me all desire. For without the law sin was dead. And I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came sin revived, and I died, and the commandment, which was unto life, I found to be unto death. For having taken occasion, sin through the commandment deceived me and through it killed me. And so the law indeed is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Did then that which is good become death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, wrought death in me through that which is good; that sin, through the commandment, might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I work, I know not; for not what I would, that do I practise, but what I hate, that I do. But if I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. So now it is no more I that work it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. For to will is present with me, but to perfect that which is

Rom. vii. 6-25.

good, is not. For the good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I practise. But if I do that I would not, it is no more I that work it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then the law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then I myself with the mind serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."

26. It is apparent, therefore, that the oldness of the letter, if the newness of the Spirit be wanting, rather makes man guilty by the knowledge of sin, than frees him from sin. Just as it is written also in another place, "He that increaseth knowledge, increaseth also sorrow." Not that the law itself is evil, but that the commandment has what is good in the letter that points out, not in the Spirit Which helps; and this commandment, if it is done by fear of punishment, not by the love of righteousness, is done slavishly, not freely, and therefore is not really done at all. For the fruit is not good which does not grow out of the root of love. But if there be present faith which worketh through love, we begin to "delight in the law of God after the inward man." And this delight does not belong to the letter, but is the gift of the Spirit; even though another law in the members still wars against the law of the mind, until all the oldness pass and be changed into

Eccles. i. 18.

the newness, which day by day is increased in the inward man, as the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord frees us from the body of this death.

27. This grace lay concealed and veiled in the Old Testament, but was revealed in the Gospel of Christ, in that most fitting dispensation of times, by which God knows how to dispose all things. And perchance it has some reference to this hiding of grace, that in the Decalogue, which was given on Mount Sinai, the commandment referring to the Sabbath is the only one which was hidden under a symbolical precept. Now, the Sabbath is the day of sanctification; nor is it without meaning, that among all the works which God made, then first did the word of sanctification sound forth, when He rested from all His works. But this I have no time to discuss further at present. But what I do think to be a matter of great importance to our present discussion is, that the people were not without a purpose commanded to abstain on that day from slavish work, by which is signified sin, but it was because not to sin is a result of sanctification, that is, of God's gift through the Holy Spirit. And the fact that in the law written on the two tables of stone this is the only thing which is enjoined under the shadow of a figure under which the Jews observe the Sabbath, is intended to signify that that was the time for hiding the grace, which had been destined to be revealed in the New Covenant through the suffering of Christ, which was as it were the rending of the veil. "But whensoever it shall pass to Christ," it is said "the veil shall be taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

Gen. ii. 3.

2 Cor. iii, 16-17.

28. Now this Spirit of God, by the gift of Whom we are justified, by Whom is effected in us the delight of not sinning, wherein is liberty, (whereas without His help sin delights us wherein there is slavery, from the works of which we are required to abstain), this Holy Spirit, by Whom love, which is the fulfilling of the law, is shed abroad in our hearts, is actually called the "finger of God" in the Gospel. Since, then, those tables were written with the finger of God, and further the finger of God is God's Spirit, by Whom we are sanctified, that living from faith we may do good works through love; who is not struck by the similarity and at the same time the difference between the two? For it is reckoned that fifty days intervened between the celebration of the Passover, which was ordered by Moses to be observed by the slaughter of a sheep (to signify doubtless the future suffering of our Lord), and the day on which Moses received the law on tables written by the finger of God. Similarly from the killing and resurrection of Him, Who was led as a sheep to the slaughter, fifty days were completed when the faithful gathered together were filled with the finger of God, that is, the Holy Spirit. Luke xi. 20.

29. And, in spite of this marvellous similarity, there is certainly this very great difference, that there the people are prevented by a horrible dread from approaching the place where the law was being given; but here those upon whom the Holy Ghost came had received the promise of His coming, and were gathered together waiting to receive Him. There the finger of God wrought upon tables of stone, here upon the hearts of men. There, then, the law was imposed from without to frighten the unrighteous; here it was given within to justify

Rom. xiii. 9, 10. them. For "Thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shall not kill, thou shalt not desire, and if there be any other commandment"—meaning, of course, such as were written on the tables—"it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself. The love of his neighbour worketh no ill, for love is the fulfilling of the law." This love was not written upon tables of stone, but shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit Which is given unto us. God's law is therefore love. To this law "the carnal mind is not subject, neither indeed can it be." But when, to frighten the carnal mind, the works of love are written upon tables, it is the law of works, and the letter that killeth the transgressor; but when love itself is shed abroad in the heart of believers, it is the law of faith and the Spirit giving life to him who loves.

30. Notice now, how closely the distinction I am pointing out agrees with the passage I quoted for another purpose a little while ago, reserving a fuller discussion

2 Cor. iii. 3. of its meaning. "Made manifest," he writes, "that ye are an epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." See how he shows that the one is written outside the man to frighten him from without, the other inside the man to justify him from within. Now, he called them "fleshy tables of the heart," not as belonging to a carnal mind, but to that which lives and has feeling, in contrast to

2 Cor. iii. 7, 13-16. a stone which has not. And what he says a little lower down, that "the children of Israel could not

steadfastly look on the end of the face of Moses," and therefore he spoke to them through the veil, signifies that the letter of the law justifies no one, but that a veil is put at the reading of the Old Covenant, until they pass to Christ and the veil be taken away. This means until they pass to grace and understand that from Him we have justification, which enables us to do what He commands. And on this account he commands, that, being not sufficient of ourselves, we may fly for refuge to Him. Therefore, when he had been careful to say "Such confidence have we through Christ to Godward," lest we should attribute this to our own strength, he immediately commended the grace of which we are speaking, by saying, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God, Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." 2 Cor. iii. 4-6

31. Because, then, as he elsewhere says, the law, by which he means that letter which was written without the man, was made "for the sake of transgression," * therefore he calls it the ministration of death and the ministration of condemnation. But the present law, that is, the law of the New Covenant, he calls the ministration of the Spirit and the ministration of righteousness, because by the gift of the Spirit we work righteousness, and are freed from the condemnation of the transgression. And so the former is done away, the latter remains; for Gal. iii. 19.

* Prevaricationis gratia. So in Serm. 156 § 4. Vulg., propter transgressionem.

the schoolmaster who frightens will be taken away, when fear is succeeded by love. "For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Now, this ministration, he says, does not arise from our merits, but from mercy, as
2 Cor. iv. 1, 2 follows: "Therefore, seeing we have this ministration, as we have received mercy, let us faint not; but let us reject the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor in guile adulterating the word of God." By craftiness and guile he here means us to understand the hypocrisy by which proud men wish to appear righteous. Similarly in the Psalm, which the same Apostle quotes
Ps. xxxii. 2. to testify to this very subject of grace, it is said, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord hath not imputed sin, and in whose mouth there is no guile." This is the confession of humble saints, not of those who boast themselves to be what they are not. And a little farther
2 Cor. iv. 5-7 down the Apostle goes on to say, "For we preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake; for God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ." The knowledge of His glory is that by which we know that He is the light to illuminate our darkness. And notice how he impresses this same truth by what follows, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves." And then he goes on for awhile to commend with greater fulness this grace in our Lord Jesus Christ, till he came to speak
2 Cor. v. 3, 4. of the garment of the righteousness of faith, which we are to put on that we may not "be found naked," and

therefore groan, weighed down by mortality, desiring to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven, that mortality may be swallowed up of life. And then notice what he says, "For He that hath wrought us for this selfsame thing is God, Who hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit"; after a while he adds, "That we may be the righteousness of God in Him." Here is not meant the righteousness of God with which He is righteous, but that with which we are made righteous by Him.

2 Cor. v. 5.

2 Cor. v. 21.

32. Let no Christian, therefore, wander from this belief, which is the only true belief of a Christian. Nor let any one, fearing to say that we are justified through ourselves without the work of God's grace within us (because he sees that faithful and godly people cannot endure such a statement), have recourse to saying that the reason why we cannot be righteous without the work of God's grace is that He has given us a law, instituted a system of teaching, laid down good commandments. For that law, without the help of the Spirit, is doubtless the letter that killeth, but when there is present the Spirit, that giveth life, He makes a man love the very same thing written within him, which the law made him fear when written without.

33. Consider this a little while by the light, also, of the passage in which the prophet makes the clearest statement on the matter. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will complete a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by their hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in My covenant, and I regarded them

Jer. xxxi. 31-34.

not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant which I will ordain to the house of Israel. After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My laws into their heart, and in their mind will I write them, and I will become their God, and they shall become My people. And they shall not teach, every man his fellow-citizen, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord, for they shall all know Me, from the less even to the greater of them ; for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and I will remember their sins no more." What do we say to this ? Now, in the books of the Old Covenant we nowhere, or hardly, find any mention by name of the New Covenant, except in this one prophetic passage. It is no doubt in many places signified and foretold as coming, but not so as to be actually expressed by name. Consider, therefore, what sort of difference God has testified that there is between the two Covenants, that is, the Old and the New.

34. When He had said "Not according to the Covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by their hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt," notice how He went on, "because they continued not in My Covenant." He makes it their fault that they did not remain in God's Covenant, lest it should be supposed that the law which they then received was to blame. For this is the same law which Christ came, not to destroy, but to fulfil ; not, however, that the ungodly are justified by it, but by grace : this verily is the action of the Spirit that giveth life without Whom the letter killeth. "For if there had been a law given, which could give life, verily righteousness should have been from the law. But the Scripture hath shut up all things under sin,

Gal. iii. 21-23.

that the promise from the faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." By this promise, that is, by the kindness of God, is the law itself fulfilled; without it, it made men transgressors, either to the extent of actual sin, if the flame of desire surmounted even the bars of fear; or at any rate in will alone, if the fear of punishment subdued the allurement of lust. Now in saying "Scripture hath shut up all things under sin, that the promise from the faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe", he shewed the usefulness of that shutting up. For the uses are shewn in another verse, where he says, "But before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up into the faith, which hath since been revealed." The law, then, was given that grace might be sought for; grace was given, that the law might be fulfilled. For it was not the fault of the law that it was not fulfilled, but of the carnal mind; and this fault had to be pointed out by the law, to be healed by grace. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sent His Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom.viii.3, 4

And this is the point of that prophetic passage we are discussing, "I will complete with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah a New Covenant" (where by "I will complete" is meant surely "I will fulfil"), "not according to the Covenant which I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by their hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt."

35. That Covenant, then, was old, because this is new. How then can that be old and this new, when the same law, which said under the Old Covenant "Thou shalt not desire," is fulfilled through the new? "Because they continued not in My Covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord." The reason why that Covenant is called old is because of the guilt of the old man, which was by no means healed through the letter that commanded and threatened. But this Covenant is called new because of the newness of the Spirit, which heals the new man from the fault of oldness.

Now notice what follows, and see how conspicuously that truth is brought out which self-confident men will not see. "For this is the Covenant," he says, "which I will ordain to the house of Israel. After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their mind I will write them." There you see the source of what the Apostle says in the passage we quoted
2 Cor.iii.3,6. above, "not in tables of stone, but in tables of the heart"; because it was "not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God." And the Apostle had no other reason, I think, in wishing to mention the New Covenant in that passage where he says, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Covenant, not of the letter but of the spirit," but that, by saying "not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart," he shows us that he was thinking of this prophecy, for the words "In their hearts will I write them" occur where the New Covenant is expressly promised.

36. What then are the laws of God written by God Himself in men's hearts, but the very presence of the Holy

Spirit, Who is the finger of God, by Whose presence love is shed abroad in our hearts, which is the fulfilling of the law, and the end of the commandment? For (if we except the symbols which foreshadowed the future, such as circumcision and the Sabbath, and other observances of days, and ceremonial distinctions of certain meats, and many kinds of sacrifices and sacred rites, all which were in harmony with the oldness of the carnal law and the yoke of bondage) it is true that the Old Covenant contains such commandments of righteousness as we are still commanded to observe. These were expressed for the most part on the tables without any figure with a symbolical meaning, such as "Thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not desire, and if there be any other commandment" which "is briefly comprehended in this saying, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." But, although it contains such commandments, the promises of the Old Covenant are only earthly, and because they are earthly and temporal, they are concerned with the good things of this corruptible flesh (however much they may typify things eternal and heavenly which belong really to the New Covenant). Now we are promised the good of the heart, the good of the mind, the good of the spirit, that is, rational * good, when it is said "I will put My laws in their mind, and in their hearts will I write them." By this he meant that they would not in future fear a law frightening them from without, but love the righteousness itself of the law dwelling within.

Rom. xiii. 9.

*intelligibile

37. And then he added also the reward, "I will become their God, and they shall become My people." This is equivalent to what the Psalmist says to God, "It is my good to hold me fast by God."

Ps. lxxiii. 28.

He says, "I will become their God and they shall be my people." What is better than this good, what happier than this happiness, to live to God, to live of God, with
Ps. xxxvi. 9 Whom is the fountain of life, and in Whose light we shall see light? Concerning this life, the Lord says
John xvii. 3. Himself, "But this is life eternal, that they may know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent," that is, "Thee, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou has sent, to be the only true God." For this thing Christ also promises to those who love Him, saying,
John xiv. 21. "He that loveth Me, keepeth My commandments; and he that loveth Me, shall be loved of My Father; and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him"; that
Phil. ii. 6. 7. means, "in the form of God," in which He is equal to the Father, not "in the form of a servant," in which He will manifest Himself also to the ungodly. For then
Is. xxvi. 10. will be fulfilled that which is written, "The wicked must be taken away so as not to see the glory of the Lord,"
Matt. xxv. 46 when those on the left hand shall go into eternal fire, but the righteous into eternal life. This eternal life has been defined in the passage I have quoted to be the knowledge of the one true God. Of this John also
1 John iii. 2. says, "Beloved, we are sons of God, and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

This likeness is already beginning to be re-formed, as
2 Cor. iv. 16. man is inwardly renewed from day to day "after the
Col. iii. 10. image of Him that created him."

38. But what is the character or extent of this present beginning when compared to the perfection

of that greatness which is to be hereafter? For the Apostle, by way of giving some sort of illustration from common life to explain such ineffable things, contrasted the age of childhood with that of man's estate, saying, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things." And he shows his object in saying this by what follows, "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known." 1 Cor. xiii. 11, 12.

39. To the same purpose the prophet, whose words we are discussing, goes on to say that in Him consists the reward, in Him the end, in Him the perfection of happiness, in Him the sum of blessed and eternal life. For when He had said "I will become their God, and they shall become my people," he went on at once to add "And they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know Me from the less even to the greater of them."

The present, no doubt, is already the time of the New Covenant, which the prophet promised in the words which we have quoted from that prophecy. Why then do men still say every man to his fellow-citizen and to his brother "Know the Lord"? Do they not say so when the gospel is preached, and the very object of preaching it is to say it everywhere? For on what grounds does the Apostle call himself the "teacher of the Gentiles," except as carrying out his own saying, "How shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? or Rom. x. 14.

"how shall they believe Him of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" Since, then, now the preaching is spreading everywhere, how can the present be the time of the New Covenant, of which the Prophet said, "And they shall not teach, every man his fellow-citizen, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know Me from the less even to the greater of them"? Is not the true explanation that in these words he went on further to promise the eternal reward of the New Covenant, that is, the blessed contemplation of God Himself?

40. What then is the meaning of "all from the less even to the greater of them," but all who belong spiritually to the house of Israel and the house of Judah, that is, to the sons of Isaac, to the seed of Abraham? For this is the meaning of the promise, in which it was said to Abraham, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." That is, "they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this, but Rebecca also, having conceived by one, even by our father Isaac, the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not from works, but from Him that calleth, it was said unto her concerning them, The greater shall serve the less." This is what the prophet calls the house of Israel, or the house of Judah, because of Christ, who came of that tribe. This is the house of "the children of promise," not the children of their

Rom. ix. 7-12.

own works, but of God's blessing. For what God promises, He does Himself; He does not promise and another perform, which would be not to promise, but to predict. Therefore it is not from works, but from Him that calleth; lest it should be of themselves instead of God; lest the reward should be not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt, and so "grace be no more grace." It was this grace which was defended and asserted so earnestly by the "least of the Apostles," who "laboured more abundantly than they all," yet not he, but the grace of God which was with him. "For all," he says, "shall know Me." "All" means the house of Israel and the house of Judah. And yet not all who are of Israel are Israel; but all to whom it is said in the Psalm "for the help of the morning" (that is, for the new light, meaning the light of the New Covenant), "magnify Him, ye whole seed of Jacob, let all the seed of Israel fear Him." Absolutely the whole seed, even the whole seed of those who were promised and called, but called according to God's purpose. "For whom He did predestinate them He also called, and whom He called, them He also justified, and whom He justified, them He also glorified." "Therefore it is from faith, that according to grace the promise may be sure to all the seed. Not to that only which is from the law," that is, comes out from the Old Covenant to the New, "but to that also which is from faith" (because they have not before received the law), "from the faith" he says, "of Abraham," that is, who are imitators of Abraham's faith, "who is the father of us all, as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations." All these,

1 Cor. xv. 9, 10.

Ps. xxii. title & 23.

Rom. viii. 28, 30.

Rom. iv. 16, 17.

then, predestinated, called, justified, glorified, will know God by the grace of the New Covenant, from the less even to the greater of them.

41. Just as, therefore, the law of deeds written upon the tables of stone, and its reward, that land of promise which the carnal house of Israel received after it had been released from Egypt, belong to the Old Covenant; so the law of faith written in men's hearts, and its reward, that vision of contemplation which the spiritual house of Israel will enjoy when released from this world, belong to the New Covenant. Then shall be fulfilled the saying of the Apostle, "Whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away." By this is meant that child-like knowledge which belongs to our present life, which is "in part, through a glass, darkly." For, for its sake, prophecy is necessary, so long as the future follows the past, and tongues, that is, a multiplicity of symbols. For he who does not yet behold with a spotless mind the eternal light of the clear truth is still taught many things in many different ways. But when that which is perfect is come, and all that which is in part has been done away, then the Word Which assumed flesh and appeared to flesh, will shew Himself to those who love Him; then will be life eternal, that we may know the only true God; then we shall be like Him, for then we shall know even as we are known. Then they shall not teach, every man his fellow-citizen or his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know Him "from the less even unto the greater of them."

1 Cor. xiii. 8-12.

John xiv. 21. John xvii. 3. 1 John iii. 2. 1 Cor. xiii. 12

These last words may be interpreted in many ways. It may mean that even in that state all the saints differ just as "one star differeth from another star in glory." In which case it does not affect the argument whether it be said "from the greater even to the less," or, as we actually have it, "from the less to the greater." Nor is the order of any importance, even if we were to understand by "the less" those who have only been able to believe, but by "the greater" those who have also been able to understand, as far as is possible in this life, the incorporeal and unchanging light. Or he may have intended by "the less" those later, by "the greater" those earlier, in time. For all will have received the promised contemplation of God at the same time; for even they foresaw better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. And "the less" are mentioned as though they were first, because they have not had to wait so long; as is symbolically expressed in the penny of the Gospel, which they who came last to the vineyard received first. Or perchance the words "less" and "greater" should be explained in some other way, which I cannot think of at present.

Heb. xi. 40

Matt xx. 8-12

42. Consider as carefully as you can what I am taking so much pains to show. When the Prophet promised the New Covenant, not according to the Covenant which was formerly made with the people of Israel when released from Egypt, he said nothing of the change of sacrifices or the several symbolical rites. And yet that was doubtless destined to follow, as we see it did follow, and is testified to in many other passages by the same prophetic scripture. But the difference which he insisted on was this only,

that God would put His laws into the mind of those who belonged to this Covenant, and would write them in their hearts, whence the Apostle derived the expression "not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." And the Prophet added that the eternal reward of this justification is not the land from which the Amorites, and the Hittites, and other nations mentioned as living there, were expelled, but God Himself to Whom it is good to hold fast, so that the good thing of God which they love is nothing else but the God Himself Whom they love. And between Him and man there is nothing which separates save sins, which are only forgiven by the grace of which we are speaking. And this is why, after saying "For all shall know Me from the less to the greater of them," he continued "I will be merciful to their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more."

By the law, then, of deeds the Lord says "Thou shalt
John xv. 5. not desire"; by the law of faith the Lord says, "Without Me ye can do nothing." For He was speaking of good works, that is, of the fruits of the vine branches. It is clear, then, that this is the difference between the Old and the New Covenant, that the law in that case was written on tables, in this on the hearts, so that what in that frightens from without, in this delights from within, and in that man is made to transgress through the letter that killeth, in this he is made to love through the Spirit Which giveth live. We ought, therefore, not to say that the way in which God helps us to work righteousness,
Phil. ii. 13. and "worketh in us to will and to work for His good pleasure," is through dinning into our senses from without

the commandments of righteousness; but through giving us increase within by shedding abroad love in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, Which is given unto us. Rom. v. 5.

43. Now we ought to consider what the Apostle means when he says, "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things of the law, these having not the law are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts." For it might seem from this passage that the promise that God would write His laws in the hearts of His people was not the definite characteristic of the New Covenant, since the Gentiles have this by nature. The question which is here raised is of great importance, and must be thoroughly considered. For some one will say, If God thus distinguishes the New Covenant from the Old, that in the Old He wrote His law upon tables, but in the New He wrote it in men's hearts; then how are the faithful of the New Covenant distinguished from the Gentiles, who have the work of the law written in their hearts, and so do by nature the things of the law? The Gentiles, indeed, would seem to be superior to the old people who received the law on tables, and to have precedence of the new people, who obtain through the New Covenant what the Gentiles have already obtained by nature. Rom ii. 14,15

44. May he not possibly have meant by those who had the law written in their hearts, the Gentiles belonging to the New Covenant? To understand this we must consider the context immediately preceding. He begins by commending the Gospel, saying, "For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is Rom. i. 16,17

the righteousness of God revealed from faith unto faith, as it is written, But the righteous lives from faith." Then he speaks of those ungodly persons whom the knowledge of God did not profit on account of their
Rom. i. 21. pride, because they "glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful." After that he goes on to speak of those who judge others, and do the very things they condemn, referring no doubt to the Jews who boasted of the law of God, although he does not as yet mention them by
Rom. ii. 8-13. name, and so he says, "Wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory and honour and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law. For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." To this he adds the passage we are discussing, saying, "When the Gentiles which have not the law do by nature the things of the law," and the rest which I quoted just now. It thus appears that by the name "Gentiles" he meant no other than those whom he before called "Greeks," when he said, "To the Jew first and also to the Greek." Moreover if the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek, and if there be wrath and indignation and tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that worketh evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honour and peace

to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek, and it is this Greek which is meant by "the Gentiles who do by nature the things of the law" and "have the work of the law written in their hearts," it is obvious that the Gentles, in whose hearts the law is written, belong to the Gospel, for it is to them when they believe that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. For to what Gentiles outside the grace of the Gospel would he promise glory and honour and peace for doing good works? For because "there is no respect of persons with God," and "not the hearers of the law but the doers are justified," whether he be a Jew or a Greek, *i.e.*, any one of the Gentiles who believes, he will equally receive salvation in the Gospel. "For there is no difference," as he afterwards says, "for all have sinned and need the glory of God, being justified freely through His grace." But what ground would he have for saying that a doer of the law, if a Greek, would be justified without the Saviour's grace? Rom iii. 22-24.

45. Now, we must not suppose that the Apostle contradicted himself when he said, "the doers of the law shall be justified," as if they were justified through works, not through grace, whereas he says that man is justified freely through faith without the works of the law, clearly wishing us to understand by the word "freely" that works do not come before justification. At any rate he says clearly enough in another passage, "If it be by grace, it is no more from works; otherwise grace is no more grace." But the words, "the doers of the law shall be justified," ought to be understood as teaching that they are not doers of the law unless they are justified; so Rom. iii. 28. Rom. xi. 6.

that justification does not come after they are doers of the law, but comes before, to make them doers of it. For what else does "justified" mean but "made righteous (just)," by Him, of course, Who justifies the ungodly, so that, instead of being ungodly, he is made righteous? For if we were to say "men will be freed," it would be certainly understood that freedom was given afterwards to those who were already men; but if we were to say "men will be created," it would be understood as meaning not that they were created who were already men, but that by their very creation they became men. Similarly, if it had been said "doers of the law shall be honoured," we should have to understand that honour would afterwards be given to those who were already doers of the law; but when it is said "doers of the law shall be justified," it is equivalent to saying "the righteous (just) shall be justified." For the doers of the law are certainly righteous. And so it is very much the same as if it were said, "doers of the law will be created," which means not "those who were doers," but "to be doers," that so even the Jewish hearers of the law might understand that they needed the grace of the Justifier, to have the power to be doers. Or, possibly, "shall be justified" was used in the sense of "shall be regarded, or reckoned righteous," as it was said of a certain person, "but
Luke x. 29. he wishing to justify himself," that is, to be regarded and reckoned righteous. Just as we use the word "hallow" in one sense when we say, "God halloweth His saints," in another when we say "Hallowed be Thy name." For the first means that He makes those to be saints who were not saints; the second, that what is ever holy

in itself should be regarded as holy by men, that is, feared with holy reverence.

46. If, then, when he mentioned the Gentiles, as doing by nature the things of the law, and having the work of the law written in their hearts, he meant those believers in Christ who come to the faith without having, like the Jews, first received the law, there is no reason why we should attempt to distinguish them from those of whom the Lord said, when He promised the New Covenant through the prophet, that He would write His laws in their hearts. For the Gentiles, too, by the graffing Rom. xi. 24. in which S. Paul says was granted to the wild olive, belong to the same olive, *i.e.*, to the same people of God. And so this passage of the Apostle rather agrees with, than contradicts, the passage from the Prophet, by implying that belonging to the New Covenant is meant by having God's law not in tables but written in the heart, *i.e.*, embracing the righteousness of the law with the inmost affections, where faith works through love. For God justifies the Gentiles from faith; and Scripture, Gal. iii. 8. foreseeing this, foreannounced to Abraham, saying, "In thy seed shall all the Gentiles be blessed," that by this promised grace the wild olive might be graffed in the olive tree, and the believing Gentiles might become sons of Abraham in the seed of Abraham, which is Christ, Gal. iii. 16. following the faith of him who, without having received Rom. iv. 16. the law on tables, and when he had not as yet even circumcision itself, believed on God and it was reckoned to him for righteousness. And so what the Apostle said of Gentiles under the same conditions, that they have the work of the law written in their hearts, is

similar to what he said to the Corinthians, "not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." For
Rom. ii. 26. so they come to be of the house of Israel, when their uncircumcision is counted for circumcision, because they do not show the righteousness of the law by the cutting of the flesh, but preserve it by the love of the heart; since "if uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?" And, therefore, in the house of the true Israel, in Whom is no guile, they are partakers of the New Covenant, because God puts laws into their minds, and writes them in their hearts by His finger, the Holy Spirit, by Whom love is there shed abroad, which is the fulfilling of the law.

47. Nor must we be surprised that he said they do the the things of the law "by nature," instead of saying "by the Spirit of God," or "by faith," or "by grace." For this is the effect of the Spirit of grace, to restore in us the image of God in which we were made by nature. It is the corruption, which is contrary to nature, which grace
Ps. xli. 4. heals; and on account of this grace the Psalmist says to God, "Be merciful unto me, heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee." Therefore men do by nature the things of the law; and those who do not the things of the law, do them not because of their corruption. By this corruption the law of God has been effaced from their hearts; and therefore, after the healing of the corruption, when the law is written in their hearts, the things of the law are done by nature; not that nature implies the denial of grace, but rather that nature is
Rom. v. 12. restored through grace. For "by one man sin entered

into the world and death through sin, and so it passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned" ; and therefore, because there is no difference, they need the glory of God, being justified freely through His grace. By this grace in the renewed inward man is written the righteousness which the corruption had effaced, and this mercy to the human race is through Jesus Christ our Lord. "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

Rom iii. 22, 24

1 Tim. ii. 5.

48. But it may be that those "who do by nature the things of the law" ought not to be considered as yet in the number of those who are justified by Christ's death, but rather of those who, though ungodly and not truly and righteously worshipping the true God, do, as we read, or know, or hear, certain deeds, which according to the rule of righteousness, we not only cannot blame, but even deservedly and rightly praise. And yet, if we consider thoroughly the motive of such deeds, they are hardly found to deserve the praise and approbation which righteousness would merit. Nevertheless it is because in the soul of men the image of God has not been so entirely obliterated by the stain of earthly affections, as that not even the faintest lineaments remain in it; and therefore a man can be rightly said, even in that ungodly state of life, to do or think some things of the law. Even if this, I say, be the meaning of the saying that "The Gentiles which have not the law," that is, the law of God, "do by nature the things of the law," and such men "are a law unto themselves" and "have the work of the law written in their hearts," that is, what was there stamped through God's image at their creation has not been entirely

effaced; even so it will not affect the difference which exists between the Old and New Covenants, namely that through the New Covenant the law of God is written in the heart of believers, which through the Old Covenant was written in tables. For that is written in the heart through the renewal, which was not entirely effaced through the old state. For just as the very image of God is renewed through the New Covenant in the mind of those who believe, and this image was not entirely destroyed by ungodliness (for there had remained at the very least the necessarily rational character of the human soul), so also is the law of God, not having been entirely destroyed by unrighteousness, renewed by grace and written in the mind.

But the law written in tables could not effect, among the Jews, that writing in the mind, which is justification, but only transgression. For even they were men, and that force of nature was inherent in them, by which the reasonable soul thinks and does something belonging to the law. But the godliness which translates a man to another life, which is blessed and eternal, has a law undefiled, which converts souls, so that men are renewed by "that light,"

Ps. iv. 6. and the words "the light of Thy countenance has been stamped * upon us, O Lord," are realized in them. Having turned aside from this light, the Jews deserved to wax old; be renewed they cannot, except by the grace of Christ by

1 Tim. ii. 5,6. the intercession of the Mediator. "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all."

* See S. Aug. Enarr. in Ps. iv. § 7.

If they of whom we are speaking, who, after the manner we just now sufficiently explained, do by nature the things of the law, are alien from His grace, what advantage will their excusing thoughts be to them in the day when God will judge the secrets of men, except perchance to procure a milder punishment? For just as certain venial sins, without which no life on earth is ever lived, do not keep the righteous man back from eternal life; even so some good works, which the life even of the worst man is seldom found without, are of no avail to an ungodly man to secure eternal salvation. But just as in the kingdom of God the saints differ as "one star differeth from another star in glory," so also in the condemnation of eternal punishment it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that city, and some will be twofold more than others the children of hell. We may therefore assume that it will make a difference in God's judgment, that even in that guilty state of ungodliness one man has sinned more or less than another.

Rom. ii. 14-16,

1 Cor. xv. 41.

Luke x. 12.

Matt xxiii. 15

49. When, then, the Apostle, by way of checking the pride of the Jews, had said, "not the hearers of the law are righteous before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified," what was his object in going on at once to speak of those, who, "not having the law, do by nature the things of the law," if we take his words as meaning not those who belong to the grace of the Mediator, but those rather who, though they do not worship the very God with true godliness, nevertheless, even in their ungodly life, have some good works? Did he not think to prove by this what he had said above, that "there is no respect of persons with God," and

Rom. ii. 13.

Rom. ii. 11.

what he afterwards said, that "He is not the God of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles"? For even the smallest works of the law planted in them by nature would not be found in them who have not received the the law, except from the relics of the image of God. And this image God despises not, as long as they believe on Him with Whom is no respect of persons.

But in whichever of these ways the passage is understood, it is clear that the grace of God is promised to the New Covenant even through the Prophet, and this grace is therein defined as consisting in this, that the laws of God are written in men's hearts, and they come to that knowledge of God in which they shall not teach, every man his fellow-citizen or his brother, saying, "Know the Lord, for all shall know Him, from the less even to the greater of them." This is the gift of the Holy Spirit, by Whom love is shed abroad in our hearts, not any ordinary love, but the love of God "out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned." By this faith the righteous man lives in the present state of pilgrimage,
1 Cor. xiii. 12 till, after the time of seeing through a glass darkly, and of the knowledge which is in part, he is brought also to sight, that he may know face to face, even as also he
Ps. xxvii. 4. is known. For one thing hath he desired of the Lord, and this he requireth, to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life, in order that he may behold the pleasantness of the Lord.

50. Let no one, therefore, boast of what he seems to have, as though he had not received it, or think that he has received it merely because the letter has from without appeared for him to read, or sounded for him

to hear. For if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nought. But if it was not for nought that Christ died, "ascended up on high, led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men"; then "whoever hath," has it from Him. And whoever says it is not from Him that he has it, either has it not, or "even that he hath shall be taken away from him." For it is one God which justifies the circumcision from faith, and the uncircumcision through faith. And this is not said by way of distinction, as though "from faith" and "through faith" were different, but for variety of language. For in another place when he spoke of the Gentiles, that is, the uncircumcision, he said, "The Scripture foreseeing that God justifies the Gentiles from faith," and likewise when he spoke of the circumcision, to which he himself belonged, he said, "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified from the works of the law, but through the faith of Jesus Christ, we also believe on Christ Jesus." Observe that he here says that the uncircumcision are justified from faith, and the circumcision through faith, provided that the circumcision keeps the righteousness of faith. For so "the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, but the righteousness which is of faith," by asking for it of God, not by presuming in it as of themselves; "but Israel, who pursued the law of righteousness, did not arrive at the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not from faith, but as it were from works," that is, as though they wrought it through themselves, instead of believing that God wrought it in them. For "it is God Who worketh in us,

Gal. ii. 21.

Ps. lxviii. 18.

Luke viii. 18.

Gal. iii. 8.

Gal. ii. 15, 16.

Rom. ix. 30-x. 4.

Phil. ii. 13.

both to will and to work for His good pleasure." And so they stumbled on the stone of stumbling. For what he meant when he said "that it was not from faith, but as it were from works," he showed most clearly when he said, "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and wishing to establish their own, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

Have we still any doubt what are the works of the law, by which a man is not justified, if he believes them to be his own without the help and gift of God, which is from the faith of Jesus Christ?" And do we suspect them to be circumcision and other commandments of the kind, because something of the same sort is said of these symbols in other places? But, in this case at any rate, it was not circumcision which they were wishing to establish as their own righteousness, because even it was established by God's command. Nor can this be understood as referring to those works of which the Lord said
Mark vii. 9. to them, "Ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may establish your traditions." "For Israel," he says, "pursuing the law of righteousness, did not arrive at the law of righteousness," he did not say pursuing, that is, following, their own traditions. The only difference then (between them and the justified) is this: that they were attributing to themselves the commandment "Thou shalt not desire," and other holy and good commandments of God, to enable man to do which God works in man through the faith of Jesus Christ, Who is the end for righteousness to every one that believeth. These words

mean that every one who is incorporated into Christ through the Spirit and made a member of Him is able, through the increase which Christ gives him from within, to work righteousness, and it is of such works that He said Himself, "Without me ye can do nothing." John xv. 5.

51. The righteousness, then, of the law is so laid down that he who does righteousness shall live therein, that, when a man knows his weakness, he may, not through his own strength nor through the letter of the law itself, which is impossible, but through faith reconciling the Justifier, arrive at righteousness and do it and live therein. For the work which, if a man do, he shall live therein, is not done except by one justified. But justification is obtained from faith, concerning which it is written, "Say not in thine heart, Who ascendeth into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down, or, Who descendeth into the abyss? that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead? But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that is," he says, "the word of faith which we preach: that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth that Jesus is the Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." As far as a man is saved, so far is he righteous. For through this faith we believe that God raises us too from the dead. For the present He raises us in our spirit, that in the newness of His grace we may "live soberly and righteously and godly in this world," but hereafter in our flesh also, which will rise to immortality, the reward of the spirit, which before this resurrection of the flesh has a resurrection suited to itself, viz. justification. "For we were Rom. x. 5-9. Tit. ii. 12.

Rom. vi. 4. buried with Christ through baptism into death; that like as Christ rose again from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life."

It is by faith, then, of Jesus Christ that we obtain salvation, not only as far as it is actually begun in us now, but as we hope for its perfection hereafter. "For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved."

Ps. xxxi. 19. "How great," says the Psalmist, "is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden for those who fear Thee, but hast perfected for those who hope in Thee." From the law we fear God, from faith we hope in God; but for those who fear punishment grace is hidden. Let the soul labouring under this fear, when it has not overcome evil desire, and the fear like some strict guard still holds it in check, through faith fly for refuge to God's lovingkindness, that He may give what He commands, and by the inspiration of the sweetness of grace through the Holy Spirit, make the command more delightsome than the hindrance to it. And so is the great multitude of God's sweetness, (that is, the law of faith, His love, written and shed abroad in men's hearts), perfected for those who hope in Him, so that the soul healed works what is good, not by fear of punishment but by love of righteousness.

52. Do we then make free choice of none effect through grace? God forbid. Nay, rather we establish free choice. For just as the law is not made of none effect, but established through faith, so free choice is not made of none effect through grace, but is established. For not even is the law fulfilled except by free choice; but through the law is the knowledge of sin, through faith

the obtaining of grace against sin, through grace is the healing of the soul from the corruption of sin, through the healing of the soul is the freedom of the choice, through free choice the love of righteousness, through the love of righteousness the working of the law. And so, just as the law is not made of none effect, but established through faith, because faith obtains grace by which the law may be fulfilled, so free choice is not made of none effect but established through grace, because grace heals the will, by which righteousness may be freely loved. All this that I have put together, as it were in a chain, finds its expression in the language of Holy Scripture. The law says, "Thou shalt not desire." Faith says, "Heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee." Grace says, "Behold thou hast been healed, sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." Health says, "O Lord my God, I have cried unto Thee, and Thou hast healed me." Free choice says, "I will freely sacrifice unto Thee." The love of righteousness says, "The unrighteous have told me of delights, but not after Thy law, O Lord."

Ps. xli. 4.
John v. 14.
Ps. xxx. 2.
Ps. liv. 6.
Ps. cxix. 85.

How, then, do miserable men dare be proud, either of their free choice before they are set free, or of their own strength when once they have been set free? And they consider not that, in the very name of free choice, there is sound of freedom at any rate. But "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." If, then, they are the slaves of sin, why do they boast of free choice? "For by whom a man has been overcome, to him he is made a slave." But if they have been made free, why do they boast as though of their own work, and glory as though

2 Pet. ii. 19.

they had not received it? Are they so very free that they do not wish to have Him for their Lord, Who says to them, "Without Me ye can do nothing," and "If the Son shall make you free, then ye shall be free indeed"?

John xv. 5. viii. 36.

53. Some one might ask whether the faith in which there seems to be the beginning of salvation, or which seems to lead to salvation, in the chain I mentioned above, is placed in our own power. We shall see the proper answer to this question more easily, if we first carefully consider what power is. Now, there are two distinct things, to will and to have power. And he who wills to do a thing has not necessarily the power, nor does he who has power necessarily will to do it; for just as we sometimes will what we have no power to do, so do we sometimes have power to do what we will not. If we analyze the expressions, their very sound tells us that "will" comes from the verb "to will," and "power" from the verb signifying "to have power." Wherefore, he who wills is possessed of will, and similarly he who has power is possessed of power. But in order for power to take effect, will must be present too. For we are not accustomed to say that a man has done a thing with power, when he has done it unwillingly (reluctantly). And yet, if we consider the matter more closely, even what a man is compelled to do unwillingly (reluctantly), if he does it, he does it by will; but because he would have preferred something else, therefore he is said to do it reluctantly or unwillingly. For under pressure of some evil, which he wishes to avoid or remove from him, he does what he is compelled to do. For if his will be so great that

he would rather endure the evil consequences than do the act, he doubtless resists the person who is compelling him, and does it not. And so if he does it, it is not with a full and free will it is true, but it is not without a will that he does it. And inasmuch as this will is followed by action, we cannot say that he has lacked power. For if he had yielded to the person who was trying to compel him and wished to do it, and yet could not, we should have to say that he had the will, even though it was extorted from him, but had not the power. But supposing his reason for not doing it was that he was unwilling, in that case he would have the power, but not the will, as long as he resisted the person compelling him and did it not. And this is why even those who are trying to compel or persuade a man to do a thing are accustomed to say, "Why do you not do what it is in your power to do, to avoid the evil consequences of not doing it?" And those who really have no power to do the thing at all which they are being compelled to do under the belief that they have, are wont to excuse themselves by saying, "I would do it if it were in my power." We see, then, without further discussion, that we mean by power will combined with the capacity of action. Wherefore a man is said to have that thing in his power which he does if he wills, and does not if he wills not.

54. Consider now the question we have proposed for discussion, whether faith lies in our power. We are now speaking of the faith which we exercise when we believe a thing, not the faith we give when we make a promise, for that also is called faith. We mean one thing when

we say "He had no faith in me," another when we say "He did not keep faith with me." For the first means "He did not believe what I said," the second "He did not do what he said." It is with the faith by which we believe, that we are faithful to God; but with that by which one performs what he promises even God Himself is faithful to us. For the Apostle implies
1 Cor. x. 13. this when he writes, "God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." Now the faith which we mean, when we inquire whether faith is in our own power, is that by which we believe God, or believe
Rom. iv. 3, 5. in God. Of this it was written, "Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness," and "To him that believeth in Him That justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

Consider now whether man believes if he wills not, or does not believe if he wills to believe; and if it is absurd to think so (for what is believing but consenting that what is said is true? and consent is the act of a willing agent) then certainly faith is in our power.
Rom. xiii. 1. But, as the Apostle says, "There is no power but of God;" what reason is there then why it should not be said even of this power, "For what hast thou that thou didst not receive"? For even to believe is God's gift. But we nowhere read in Holy Scripture, "There is no will but of God." And rightly so, for it is not true; otherwise God is the author even of sins (which God forbid!) if there is no will but of Him; for an evil will by itself is sin, even if it result not in action, or, in other words, have not the power. Accordingly when an evil will receives the power of fulfilling what

it intends, this comes from the judgment of God, with Whom is no unrighteousness. For He punishes even in this way, and not unjustly, because secretly. But the unrighteous man does not know that he is being punished, except when by manifest punishment he is made unwillingly to feel how great the evil is which he has committed willingly. This is what the Apostle says of certain persons, "God gave them up to the desires of their heart, to do those things which are not convenient." Of this, too, the Lord said to Pilate, "Thou wouldst have no power against Me, except it were given thee from above." But when power is given no necessity certainly is imposed. Thus when David had received the power of killing Saul, he preferred to spare him rather than to strike him. From this we see that the wicked receive power for the condemnation of their evil will, but the good to prove their good will.

Rom. i. 28.

John xix. 11.

1 Sam. xxiv. 10; xxvi. 9-11

55. Since, therefore, faith is in our power, because when a man wills he believes, and when he believes he believes willingly; we must inquire further, or rather consider again, what faith the Apostle is commending with so much earnestness. For it is not good to believe everything, for else what would be the reason of saying, "Brethren, believe not every spirit; but prove the Spirit which is of God." Nor in that praise of love ought we so to understand the words "believeth all things" as to lessen our estimate of a man's love if he does not at once believe whatever he may hear. Does not the same love admonish us not readily to believe any evil of a brother, and if any evil is told her, does she not consider that it becomes her rather not to believe it? In the last place the very love which believes all

1 John iv. 1.

1 Cor. xiii. 7.

things believes not every spirit ; and so she believes all things, but believes God, for it is not said "believes all beings."* It is clear, then, that the faith commended by the Apostle is that by which a man believes God.

56. But a further distinction has still to be made. For they also believe God who are under the law, and through fear of punishment are trying to work their own righteousness, and, therefore, are not working the righteousness of God, because that is the work of love, which only likes what is lawful, not of fear, which is compelled to do what is lawful while it wills something else, and would therefore prefer that, if it were possible, what is not lawful were lawful. These, I say, believe God ; for if they did not, they certainly would not fear the punishment of the law. But this is not the faith which the Apostle commends,

Rom. viii. 15. when he says "For ye have not received the spirit of slavery again unto fear, but ye have received the spirit of the adoption of sons, whereby we cry Abba, Father." That fear, then, is slavish, and therefore, although by it a man believes the Lord, yet it is not, however, from love of righteousness, but from fear of condemnation. But sons cry "Abba, Father," of which two words the first belongs to the Circumcision, the second to the Uncircum-

Rom. iii. 30. cision, "of the Jew first and also of the Greek," "seeing it is one God, which justifies the Circumcision from faith, and the Uncircumcision through faith." But when they so cry, they seek for something ; and what do they seek for, except what they are hungering and thirsting after ? And

* Omnia quidem credit, sed Deo ; quia non dictum est, omnibus.

what is this but that which is said of them, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled?" Matt. v. 6.

To this let them pass, who are under the law, that from being slaves they may become sons, and yet not in such a way as to cease being slaves, but as sons to be the slaves of the Lord and Father in freedom, for this too they have received. For the Only-begotten gave "power to become the sons of God to them that believe on His name," and John i. 12. He admonished them to ask, to seek, to knock, that they may receive and find, and that it may be opened to them; adding this rebuke, "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father Which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him." Matt. vii. 7-11. When, then, the law which is "the strength of sin" has inflamed "the sting of death," so that having taken occasion sin through the commandment works all 1 Cor. xv. 56. manner of desire, from whom can a man seek self-restraint except from Him, Who knows how to give good gifts to His children? Or perchance the man is so foolish that he does not know that "no one can restrain himself unless Rom. vii. 8. God gives it." Wisd. viii. 21. To know this, therefore, he needs nothing less than wisdom. Why, then, does he not listen to the Spirit of his Father speaking through the Apostle of Christ, or to Christ Himself, Who says in His Gospel, "Ask, and ye shall receive," and speaks also in His Apostle and says, "If James i. 5, 6. any of you need wisdom, let him ask of God, That giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him: but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering."

This is the faith from which the righteous man lives. This is the faith by which a man believes on Him Who justifies

the ungodly. This is the faith through which boasting is
See § 17. excluded, whether that expression means that the boasting by which we are inflated is excluded so as to depart, or that the boasting by which we glory in the Lord is pressed out so as to become prominent. This is the faith by which is obtained the plenteousness of the Spirit, of Whom it is
Gal. v. 5. said, "For we by the Spirit from faith wait for the hope of righteousness." Here indeed we might still ask whether the hope of righteousness signifies that with which righteousness hopes, or that by which righteousness itself is hoped for. Because the righteous man who lives from faith certainly hopes for eternal life; and likewise the faith which hungers and thirsts after righteousness advances in righteousness by the renewal of the inward man from day to day, and hopes to be satisfied with it in eternal life, when that will be realized which is said of God in the
Ps. ciii. 5. Psalm, "Who satisfieth thy desire with good things." This is the faith by which they are saved to whom it is said,
Eph. ii. 8-10. "By grace have ye been saved through faith; this not of yourselves, but it is the gift of God; not from works, lest perchance any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."
Gal. v. 6. Lastly, this is the faith which works through love, not through fear, not by fearing punishment, but by loving righteousness. Whence, then, is that love, that is, the charity through which faith works, but from the source from which faith itself has obtained it? For it would not be in us, even as far as it is in us, were it not shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit Which is given unto us. Now by the love of God which is shed abroad in our hearts is

meant, not the love by which He Himself loves us, but that by which He makes us love Him; just as by the righteousness of God is meant that by which we are made righteous by His gift, and by the salvation of the Lord is meant that by which He saves us, and by the faith of Jesus Christ that by which He makes us believers. This is the righteousness of God, which He not only teaches through the commandment of the law, but gives through the gift of the Spirit.

See § 15.

See § 18.

See § 18.

57. But it still remains for us to consider for a while whether the will by which we believe is itself too God's gift, or should be regarded as arising out of free choice, which is by nature planted in us. For if we say that it is not God's gift, it is to be feared that we may think that we have found an answer to the Apostle's rebuke and question, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" For we might say, "Lo, we have the will to believe, which we did not receive; lo, here is something to glory in, which we have not received." But if, on the other hand, we say that even will of this kind is not other than a gift of God, again it is to be feared that unbelievers and ungodly men may seem to excuse themselves with some show of justice, saying that the reason they have not believed is that God has not thought good to give them that will. For the words, "For it is God Which worketh in us both to will and to work for His good pleasure," refer now to the grace which faith obtains, that man may be enabled to have the good works, which faith works by love, shed abroad in the heart through the Holy Spirit Which is given unto us. But* we

1 Cor. iv. 7.

Phil. ii. 13,

* Sed, so MSS. Si, in Ben., and other Edd.

believe in order that we may obtain this grace, and certainly we believe by our will; the question, then, is whence we have this will. If by nature, why do not all have it, since the same God is the Creator of all? If by God's gift, again why not all, since He "willeth all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth"?

58. First, then, let us suppose the former of these two alternatives and see whether it gives a satisfactory answer to our inquiry. Let us suppose that free choice, given as a natural property by the Creator to the rational soul, is a neutral power, which may be inclined either to faith or unbelief. In this case, not even that will by which a man believes in God can he be said to have, without having received it; since at the call of God it arises from the free choice which he received naturally when he was created.

1 Tim. ii. 4. But God "willeth all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth," not, however, so as to take away their free choice, but that they may be most justly judged for a good or bad use of it. Under these circumstances unbelievers act contrary to God's will when they do not believe His Gospel; but they do not therefore overcome it, but deprive themselves of a great and the highest good, and involve themselves in evils sent as a punishment, to find in punishment the power of Him Whose mercy in gifts they have despised. Thus God's will is never overcome; but it would be overcome if He found no way of treating those who despised Him, or if they could in any way evade what He has determined concerning them. For if a man says, for the sake of example, "I wish all these slaves of mine to work in my vineyard, and after work to rest and feast, so that whoever of them refuses to do this must grind for ever in

a mill," the slave who despises his wish seems indeed to be acting contrary to the will of his lord ; but then only will he overcome it, if he succeed in despising and escaping the mill as well. And this can in no wise happen under God's power.

Similarly it is written, " God spake once," that is, unchangeably (though it might be also taken of the only-begotten Word), and then, adding what He said unchangeably, the Psalmist says, "These two things have I heard, that power belongeth unto God, and to Thee, Lord, belongeth mercy, for Thou wilt render to every man according to his works." He, then, will be guilty and condemned under His power, who has despised His mercy and refused to believe. But whoever has believed and has committed himself to Him to be absolved from all sins, and to be healed of all faults, and to be enkindled and enlightened by His heat and light, will have by His grace good works, by which he may be redeemed even in his body from the corruption of death, crowned and satisfied with good things, not temporal but eternal, above what we ask and think. Ps. lxii. 11, 12

59. This order has been maintained in the Psalm where it is said, " Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His rewards, Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, Who healeth all thy infirmities, Who redeemeth thy life from corruption, Who crowneth thee with mercy and loving-kindness, Who satisfieth thy desire with good things." And lest, perchance, the deformity of this old state, that is, of mortality, should despair of these great blessings, he says, " Thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle's," as though he were to say, " These things which you have Ps. ciii. 2-5.

heard belong to the new man and the New Covenant." Reconsider with me for a while this same passage, I beseech you, and look with delight on its praise of loving-kindness, that is, God's grace. "Bless the Lord," he says, "O my soul, and forget not all His rewards." He does not say, "all His gifts," but "all His rewards," because He rewardeth good for evil. "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities": this takes place in the Sacrament of Baptism. "Who healeth all thy sicknesses:" this takes place in the present life of a believer, while "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, so that we do not the things that we would, while another law in our members warreth against the law of our mind; while to will is present with us, but to perfect that which is good, is not." And these sicknesses of our old life, if we advance with perseverance of purpose, are healed as our new life grows from day to day from faith which worketh through love. "Who redeemeth thy life from corruption:" this is done in the final resurrection from the dead. "Who crowneth thee with mercy and lovingkindness:" this is done in the Judgment. For when the just King shall sit upon His Throne to render to every man according to His works, who will boast that he has a chaste heart? or who will boast that he is pure from sin? It was necessary, therefore, to mention the mercy and lovingkindness of the Lord at that point where it might seem that debts would be demanded and merits rewarded so strictly as to leave no room for lovingkindness. "He crowneth, therefore, with mercy and lovingkindness," but even so according to men's works. For he will be separated to the right hand, to whom it is to be said, "I was an hungered and thou

Gal. v. 17.

Rom. vii. 25, 18.

gavest me to eat," since there is to be judgment without mercy only to him who has showed no mercy. But "Blessed are the merciful, for God will be merciful to them." Now, when those on the left hand shall have gone into eternal burning, but the righteous into eternal life (because "this," he says, "is life eternal, that they may know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent"), John xvii. 3. by that knowledge, by that vision, by that contemplation, will the desire of the soul be satisfied with good things. For this alone satisfies it; beyond this it has nothing to seek, to pant for, to require. For he was burning with the desire of this satiety, who said to the Lord Christ, "Show John xiv. 8, 9 us the Father, and it sufficeth us." To whom the answer was given, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also." "For this is life eternal itself, that they should know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent." But if he who has seen the Son has seen also the Father, then certainly he who sees the Father and the Son sees also the Holy Spirit of the Father and the Son. So we do not take away free choice, and our soul blesses the Lord, not forgetting all His rewards; neither does the soul ignorant of God's righteousness wish to establish its own, but believes on Him Who justifies the ungodly, and lives by faith until it be led to sight, by that faith verily which works through love. And this love is shed abroad in our hearts, not through the sufficiency of our own will, nor through the letter of the law, but through the Holy Spirit Which has been given unto us.

60. Let this discussion suffice, if it suffices to solve the question. But it may be answered, that we ought to be careful lest we should think that sin, which comes in

through free choice, must be attributed to God, if in the words, "What hast thou which thou hast not received?" even the will by which we believe is assigned to God's gift, just because it comes of the free choice, which we received when we were created. Let us, then, consider carefully and see that that will ought not to be attributed to God's gift, solely on the ground that it comes from the free choice which was created with us as part of our nature, but also because God influences our will and belief by the persuasions of things perceived. This takes place either from without through the exhortations of the Gospel, where even the commandments of the law have some effect if they admonish a man of his weakness in order that he may by believing take refuge in justifying grace, or from within, where no one has it in his power to decide what shall come into his mind, but to consent or dissent belongs to his own will. When in these ways, then, God so acts with the rational soul that it believes on Him (for a man cannot believe anything by free choice, unless there be some persuasion or call to determine his belief), then certainly even the very wish to believe is the work of God in man, and in all things His mercy prevents us. But to consent to God's call or to dissent from it belongs, as I said before, to man's own will. And this not only does not weaken the saying, "For what hast thou, which thou didst not receive?" but it even confirms it. The soul certainly cannot receive and have the gifts about which it hears these words except by consenting, and so what a man may receive and have belongs to God; but the act of receiving and having belongs to him who receives and has.

Now if any one compel us to investigate that deep question, why one man is so persuaded as to be thoroughly convinced, and not another, for the moment only two things occur to me which I should like to say in reply. "O the depth of the riches!" and "Is there unrighteousness with God?" And if any one does not approve of this answer, let him seek for some more learned teachers, but let him be careful lest those he find should be overbold.

Rom. xi. 33.

Rom. ix. 14.

61. Let us now, at length, bring our work to a close. Whether we have effected anything by its great prolixity, I know not; I do not mean with you whose faith I know, but in the minds of those for whom you wished me to write. It is not our opinion that they are opposing, but (to express it gently, and not say the opinion of Him Who spake in His Apostles) the opinion of the great Apostle Paul, and that not merely once stated, but contended with such vehemence and earnestness. And they prefer defending their own opinion to listening to the Apostle, when he beseeches them by the mercy of God, and tells them through the grace of God given unto him, not to think more highly than they ought to think, but to think soberly according as God hath dealt to every man a measure of faith.

62. Consider now the question you proposed to me, and the result we have arrived at by such a great and lengthy discussion. You were perplexed, you will remember, to understand how it can be said to be possible for a man to be without sin, supposing his will is not wanting, and he is assisted by God's help, although no one in this present life either has been or is or will be so perfectly righteous. For

this is what I said on this subject in the books which I wrote to you before, "If I am asked," I said, "whether it is possible for man to be without sin in this present life, I will confess that it is possible through God's grace and his own free choice; without hesitating to say that even free choice belongs to God's grace, that is, God's gifts, and that not merely because God makes it, but because He makes it good, that is, converts it to do the Lord's commands. And so the object of God's grace is not only to point out what ought to be done, but also to help so as to make possible what it points out." But to you it seemed absurd that, if a thing is possible, we should have no instance of it. From this arose the question of this book, and so it was necessary for us to show that there were things that were possible, even though there was no instance of their occurrence. For this purpose, in the beginning of this treatise we gave instances from the Gospel and the Law—as of a camel going through a needle's eye, and the twelve thousand legions of angels who might have fought for Christ had He wished, and those nations which God says He might have exterminated at once from before His people; all of which did not actually take place. To these might be added also what we read in the book of Wisdom, how many new plagues God might have employed against the ungodly with creatures serving His behest, but He did not employ them. And again, we may instance the mountain which faith should move into the sea; yet we have never read or heard of its having happened. If a man were to say that any of these things is impossible with God, you see how foolish he would be, and how contrary to the faith of God's Scripture he would speak. Many other things of the same

Wisd. xi. 17, 18; xvi. 24.

kind might occur to us, as we read or think, which we cannot deny are possible with God, although there is no instance of their occurrence.

63. But because it might be said that those are works of God, but to live righteously belongs to our own works, I undertook to show that even this was a work of God, and this I have treated of in this book more fully than was necessary perhaps; but against the enemies of God's grace I seem to have said but too little, and never am I so pleased to speak, as when God's Scripture is so abundant in my support, and when my object is that he that glorieth may glory in the Lord, and in all things we may give thanks to our Lord God, lifting up our hearts to that place whence every good gift and every perfect gift cometh from the Father of lights. For if it is not God's work, because it is done through us or we do it by His gift, then neither is the moving of the mountain into the sea God's work; because it is through men's faith that our Lord said it can be done, and He attributed it to their work, saying, "If ye have faith in you as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea, and it shall be done, and nothing shall be impossible unto you." Notice, He said "unto you," not "unto Me," or "unto the Father," and yet man in no wise does this without God's gift and work.

You see, then, how perfect righteousness, though without example among men, is nevertheless not impossible. For it might be effected, if a will of sufficient power for so great an object were directed towards it; and the will would be sufficient, if not only we knew every single thing that belongs to righteousness, but also our minds were so

delighted therewith, that no other pleasure or pain could any longer hinder our joy. That this is not so belongs not to the impossibility of the thing, but to God's decree. For who can but know that man's knowledge lies not in his own power, and that it follows not that he will desire what he knows to be desirable, unless it delights him as much as it deserves? But this is true only of the healthy soul.

64. But some one may think perchance that we lack nothing towards the knowledge of righteousness, because
Rom ix. 28. the Lord, finishing the word and cutting it short upon the earth, said that upon two commandments hung all the Law and the Prophets; and did not pass them over in silence, but set them forth in the plainest language,
Matt. xxii. 37-40. saying, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." What can be truer than that when these have been fulfilled, righteousness is altogether fulfilled? But let him who considers this consider also how in many things we all offend, while we think we are pleasing, or are not displeasing, God Whom we love in what we do, and afterwards, when we have learned, either through His Scripture or by the warnings of certain and clear reason, what pleases Him not, we penitently pray for pardon. The life of man is full of such teachings. How comes it that we do not know well enough what pleases Him, except that
1 Cor. xiii. 12 He Himself is not well enough known to us? For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Who then would dare to think that when they have come to that state described in the words "that I may

know even as also I am known," those who see God will not have a greater love for Him than those who believe have now? or that the one love can be in any way even approximately compared to the other? If, therefore, the greater the knowledge the greater be the love, then we must certainly believe that the imperfection of our righteousness is measured by the imperfection of our love.

For a thing may be known or believed without being loved; but that cannot be loved which is neither known nor believed. But if, by believing, saints have been able to attain to so great love (than which the Lord has testified there can be no greater in this life), as to lay down their lives for the faith or the brethren; then when, after this pilgrimage in which we now walk by faith, we shall have arrived at sight (which, having not yet seen, we hope for and by patience wait for it), love itself will doubtless also be not only above what we now have, but far above what we ask and think. Still that love cannot possibly be more than "with all the heart, with all the soul, and with all the mind." For we have nothing left to add to what is "all," for it would not be "all," if anything were left. This first commandment, then, of righteousness, by which we are bidden to love the Lord with all the heart, with all the soul, and with all the mind, next to which comes the other of loving one's neighbour, we shall fulfil in that life when we shall see face to face. But the reason why this commandment has been given us even now is that we may be admonished what we should demand by faith, whither we should direct our hopes, and what things before us we should stretch forward to, forgetting those things which are behind. And so he has made, I think, a great

John xv. 3.

advance during this life in the righteousness, which is to be made perfect, who has gone far enough to discover how far he is from the perfect righteousness.

65. But if we may speak of a lesser righteousness, as it were, suited for this life, in which the righteous man lives by faith although absent from the Lord, and, therefore, walking by faith and not yet by sight, it is not absurd to say that it belongs even to this righteousness not to sin. And yet it ought not to be counted as a man's fault if there cannot be yet so great a love of God as is due to that full and perfect knowledge. Because not to have attained to perfect love is a very different thing from being led by no evil desire. Wherefore a man ought, even though he loves God far less than it is possible to love Him when he sees Him, nevertheless to seek after nothing which is unlawful. Just in the same way also in regard to objects of sense, it is quite possible for the eye to take no delight in darkness, though it is not possible for it to gaze on the most brilliant light.*

But come, let us now suppose a human soul so constituted in this corruptible body that, although it has not yet by that exceedingly excellent and perfect love for God absorbed and swallowed up all the feelings of earthly desire, yet in that state of lesser righteousness it consents not by the slightest leaning to that desire, so as to work anything that is unlawful. So that to the higher life even now immortal belongs the precept "Thou shalt love the

* The Benedictine text here inserts the passage beginning on p. 83, "Having determined this — fear of punishment" without MSS. authority.

Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might"; to this lower life belong the words "Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof"; to that higher life "Thou shalt not desire"; to this lower "Go not after thy desires": to that it belongs to seek nothing further than to continue in that perfection; to this that a man should still be working what he has in hand, and hope for its perfection as a reward. So that through that other life the righteous man lives without end in "sight," which he has longed for in this; while through this the righteous man lives by faith, in which he longs for that higher life with fixed limitations. Having determined this, it will be sin for a man who lives by faith even to consent to any unlawful pleasure, not only in perpetrating what are regarded as horrible deeds and crimes, but in things of a less heinous character, such as lending the ear to any words which should not be heard, or allowing the tongue to utter what should not be uttered, or even so thinking in the heart as to wish that to be lawful which he is wrong in liking, and knows through the commandment to be unlawful. For even that consent partakes of the nature of sin, for it would become act but for the fear of punishment. Have such righteous men living by faith no need to say "Forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors"? And do they prove the Scriptures to be false which say, "In Thy sight shall no man living be justified," and "If we shall say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us," and "That there is no man that will not sin," and "There is not a righteous man upon earth that doeth good and will not sin"? Notice, that both these last

Rom. vi. 22.

Eccles. xviii. 30.

Matt. vi. 12.

Ps. cxliii. 2.

1 John i. 8.

1 Kings viii. 46.

Eccles. vii. 21.

passages speak not of the past, "has not sinned," but of the future, "will not sin"; and there are other things said in Holy Scripture to this same purpose. But since these words of Scripture cannot be false, I see that it follows that whatever kind or degree of righteousness we may define as possible in this life, there is no man living in it who is altogether without sin. And for every man it is necessary to give that it may be given unto him, to forgive that it may be forgiven him; and, if he has any righteousness, not to presume upon it, as though it were his own, but to refer it to the grace of a justifying God, and nevertheless to hunger and thirst after righteousness from Him Who is "the Living Bread," and with Whom is the fountain of Life; Who so works justification in His saints while labouring in this life of temptation that there is still something for His bounty to give to those who seek it, something for His mercy to pardon for those who confess.

66. But let them find, if they can, some one living under the burden of this corruption, whom God has even now nothing to pardon; yet if they maintain that he was helped to be so only by the teaching of the law which was given him, and not also by the grace-giving Spirit Which was infused, they will incur the charge, not of any ordinary sin, but of ungodliness itself. Although they will be utterly unable to find such a one, if they receive in their true sense those passages of Divine Scripture, yet it ought by no means to be said that God has not the power of so helping man's will that not only that righteousness which is of faith may now be completely perfected in man, but even that righteousness also in which man is hereafter to live eternally in the very

contemplation of God. Since, if God should will now that in any man even this corruptible should put on incorruption, and should choose to command him to live here among mortal men an immortal life, so that, his old life being altogether done away, no law in his members should war against the law of his mind, and he should know the ever-present God as completely as the saints will hereafter know Him, who would be so mad as to dare to assert that God could not do it? But men ask why God does not do it. Those who so ask do not consider that they are men. I know that, as there is nothing impossible, so there is no unrighteousness with God. And I know that He "resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." And I know that he who had the thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, given him to buffet him, that he might not be exalted above measure, when he prayed for its removal, once, twice, and a third time was told "My grace is sufficient for thee, for strength is made perfect in weakness." There is some reason, then, in the secret depths of God's judgment, by which every mouth, even of the righteous, should be stopped in its own praise, and not be opened except in praise of God. But this reason who can possibly pry into? who can find out? who can know? "So unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him and through Him and unto Him are all things. To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen." Rom. xi. 33-36.

NATURE AND GRACE.

1. I have laid aside for the moment the work which I had on hand, and have read through the book which you, my dearest sons, Timasius and James, sent me, rapidly indeed, but with no slight attention. I see therein a man inflamed with the most burning zeal against those who, instead of accusing the will of man for their own sins, rather accuse the nature of man, and on that account endeavour to excuse themselves. He has excited himself beyond measure against this pestilential habit; for even secular writers have severely censured it, saying, "False are the complaints which the human race makes of its own nature." It is exactly this opinion which your author also has emphasized with all the ability that he possesses. I am afraid, however, that he inclines to cast in his lot with those who "have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge: for they, being ignorant of God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." And the Apostle unfolds in the following words what that righteousness of God is, of which he here speaks, adding, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." Hence, the man who understands that

Sallust: Prologue to Jugurthine War.

Rom. x. 2, 3.

Rom. x. 4.

this righteousness of God does not lie in the commandment of the law which inspires fear, but in the assistance of the grace of Christ, to which alone the fear of the
Gal. iii. 24. law, as of a schoolmaster, profitably guides us, this
Gal. ii. 21. man, I say, understands why he is a Christian. For "if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nought." But if He died not for nought, in Him alone is the ungodly justified when believing in Him Who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.
Rom. iv. 8. "For all have sinned and need the glory of God, being
Rom. iii. 23, 24. justified freely" through His blood. But whoever are not supposed to belong to this class of "all" who "have sinned and need the glory of God," have certainly no
Matt. ix. 12, 13. necessity for becoming Christians; for "they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick," and therefore He "came not to call the righteous but sinners."

2. And hence it follows that if the nature of the human race, as engendered from the flesh of that one transgressor, is sufficient of itself to fulfil the law and to perfect righteousness, it ought to be certain of the reward, that is, of eternal life, even if in some race or in some bygone age it knew not of faith in the blood of Christ. For God is not unrighteous that He should defraud the righteous of the reward of righteousness, if they have
1 Tim. iii. 16 not been told of the mystery which was manifested in the flesh, of the Divinity and Humanity of Christ.

Rom. x. 14, 17, 18. For "how should they believe that which they have not heard? or how should they hear without a preacher?" For "faith cometh by hearing," as it is written: "but hearing by the word of Christ. But I say," the Apostle continues, "have they not heard? Their sound is gone

out into all the earth, and their words into the ends of the world." But before this began to take place, and before this preaching reaches to the very ends of the whole world (since there are still some most remote nations, although, as it is said, they are very few in number, to whom this has not yet been preached), what will, or what did human nature do, seeing that in the one case it had not heard beforehand that this would take place, in the other it is still in ignorance that it has taken place? It could and can but believe in God Who made heaven and earth, and by Whom also it instinctively feels that it was created, and live uprightly, and thus fulfil His will, without being instructed in the faith of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ. And if this was possible or is possible, I too say the same as the Apostle said about the law, "Then Christ died for nought." For Gal. ii. 21.
if he said this of that law which the one nation of the Jews received, with how much greater justice is it said of the law of nature which the whole human race received, "If righteousness be by nature, then Christ died for nought"? But if Christ died not for nought, then the whole of human nature can in no way be justified and redeemed from the most righteous wrath of God, that is from punishment, but through the faith and the mystery* of the blood of Christ. * Sacramentum.

3. Truly the nature of man was originally created blameless and without any corruption; but that nature of man, with which each is born of Adam, now needs a physician because it is not whole. Every good thing, indeed, which it possesses in its constitution, life, senses, intellect, it has from the most high God, its Creator and

Maker. But the corruption which darkens and weakens those good gifts of nature, so that it needs illumination and healing, was not derived from its blameless Maker, but from original sin which was committed through free choice; and on this account a penal nature is a part of
2 Cor. v. 17. a most righteous punishment. For if we are now in Christ a new creature, still we were by nature children
Eph. ii. 3-5. of wrath, even as the rest; but God, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by Whose grace we have been made whole.

4. But this grace of Christ, without which neither infants nor aged can be made whole, is not paid for merits, but is given gratis; and for this reason is termed
Rom. iii. 24. "grace." As the Apostle says, "Being justified freely (gratis) through His blood," wherefore those who are not by this means set free (either because they have not yet been able to hear, or because they refused to obey, or even because, when by reason of old age they could not hear, they received not the washing of regeneration which they might have received and been saved), are certainly righteously condemned; since they are not without sin, either that which they derived from their birth, or that which they added by their evil lives. "For
Rom. iii. 23. all have sinned" (either in Adam or in themselves), "and need the glory of God."

Rom. ix. 21, and S. Aug. Serm. xxvi. § 13. 5. Therefore the whole "lump" is under an obligation to suffer punishment; and if the due punishment of condemnation were inflicted on all, undoubtedly there would be no injustice in so doing. Hence, those who by grace
Rom. ix. 2, 3 are set free from this punishment are called not "vessels

of their own merits," but "vessels of mercy;" of Whose mercy, if not His Who sent Christ Jesus into this world to make sinners whole, whom He foreknew and predestinated, and called, and justified, and glorified? Who, then, can be so utterly out of his mind as not to give ineffable thanks for the mercy of Him Who frees whom He has willed, since he could in no way rightly impugn His justice if He condemned the whole of mankind together?

1 Tim. i. 15.

Rom. viii. 29, 30.

6. If we thus believe according to the Scriptures, we are not compelled to argue against Christian grace, and make statements with the intention of proving that in little children human nature does not need a physician, because it is sound, and that in older people it can be sufficient of itself for righteousness if it wills. To be sure, such arguments seem sharp; but the sharpness lies in "the wisdom of words," whereby the Cross of Christ is made of none effect. That is not "the wisdom that cometh down from above"; I will not go on with the quotation, lest we should be thought to be injuring our friends, whose very strong and active minds we wish to set running, not in the wrong, but in the right course.

1 Cor. i. 17.

James iii. 15

7. Therefore, however warm be the zeal which inflames the author of this book which you have sent against those who seek an excuse for their sins in the infirmity of human nature, we must be inflamed with equal, nay with far more fiery, zeal, lest the Cross of Christ be made of none effect. But it is made of none effect by the assertion that righteousness and eternal life can be attained in any other way than through His mystery*; and such is the argument of this book (I do not mean to say that the author is conscious of it, lest I should be judging

* Sacramentum.

1 Tim. iii. 16

him unworthy to be regarded as a Christian; but, I would rather think, that he is not conscious of it). It shews great power certainly, but I wish that it was healthy and not like that of a madman.

8. For he begins by drawing a distinction. *It is one thing*, he says, *to inquire whether a thing can be, for that relates only to possibility; it is a different thing to inquire whether it actually is.* The truth of this distinction no one doubts; for that which is must have been possible; but that which is possible need not actually be. For the fact that the Lord raised Lazarus, doubtless proves that He could; but from the fact that He did not raise Judas, can it be said that He could not have done so? He could therefore, but He would not. For had He willed, He could have effected even this by the same power, for "The Son also quickeneth whom He will."

John v. 21.

But notice his aim and the use that he tries to make of this true and obvious distinction. *We*, he says, *are dealing with the possibility only; and we regard it as most monstrous and unfair to pass to a further point before arriving at a clear decision on this.* He continues to repeat this in various ways and at considerable length, to prevent the supposition that he is inquiring into anything else than the *possibility of not sinning.* So among the many passages in which he discusses this subject, he says as follows: *I repeat the same thing again, I say that man can be without sin: what do you say? that man cannot be without sin? I do not say that man is without sin; you do not say that man is not without sin; our argument is about what can be and what cannot be, not about what is and what is not.* Then he shows that some of the

Scripture passages, which are usually alleged against them, have no bearing on his inquiry as to whether man can be or cannot be without sin, as follows: *For the statements "None is free from stain;" and "There is no man that sinneth not;" and "There is not a righteous man upon earth;" and "There is none that doeth good," and the other passages of a similar kind,* he says, *prove what there is not, not what there cannot be. For by statements of this kind we are shewn the character of certain men at a definite time, not that they could not have been different; hence also it is with justice that we find them blamed. For they are free from blame if they were in that condition, because they could not be otherwise.*

Job xiv. 4. 1 Kings viii. 46. Eccles. vii. 20. Ps. xiv. 4.

9. See what he says; now, I say that a little child born in a place where he could not be assisted by the baptism of Christ, and overtaken by death, was such, that is, died without the washing of regeneration, because he could not be otherwise. On that account let your author absolve him and open to him the kingdom of heaven, in contradiction to the Lord's decree. But the Apostle does not absolve him when he says "By one man sin entered into the world, and by sin death, and so it passed unto all men, in whom all have sinned." Therefore with justice, because of that condemnation which runs through the whole lump, the child is not admitted into the kingdom of heaven, although he not only was not, but could not even have been, a Christian.

John iii. 3. Rom. v. 12. Cf. Vulg.

10. But they say 'He is not condemned; because all are said to have sinned in Adam, not by reason of sin brought upon them originally from their birth, but by reason of imitation.' In that case, if Adam is called

the father of all the sinners who have come after him, because he was the first sinner among men, why is not Abel, rather than Christ, accounted the head of all the righteous, because he was the first righteous man among men?

But I am not now speaking of an infant: a young or old man has died in a country where he could not hear the name of Christ; could he have become righteous by nature and free choice, or could he not? If they say he could have become so, you see an instance of
1 Cor. i. 17. what is meant by "making the Cross of Christ of none effect," in their maintaining that without it anyone can be justified through the law of nature and the choice
Gal. ii. 21. of his will. Here too we must say, "Then Christ died for nought"; for this justification would lie in the power of all, even if He had not died; and if they were unrighteous, they would be so because they willed it, not because they could not be righteous. But if that man could not have been justified at all without the grace of Christ, let your author, if he dares, absolve him as well, according to his own statement; because *he is free from blame if he was in that condition because he could not be otherwise.*

11. But he introduces an objection to himself, as though made by some one else, and says, *You will say, "It is indeed possible, but by the grace of God."* To this he adds, by way of answer, *I thank you for your courtesy; you are not content with withdrawing your opposition to that assertion of mine which you were just now opposing, or merely with granting its truth, but you do not even hesitate to prove it. For does not the statement, "It is indeed possible but by so*

*and so," not only allow that it is possible but also shew *by what means it is possible or *with what quality? Hence no one more clearly proves the possibility of anything than he who at the same time states its quality*; for no quality can exist without a subject.* After this he again makes the objector say, *You will say, "But in this connexion you seem to deny the grace of God by not mentioning it."* Then he replies, *Is it I who deny it, who, in acknowledging the result, acknowledge also of necessity that through which it can be produced? or is it you who, in denying the result, deny also undoubtedly that, whatever it be, through which the result is produced?* He forgets that he is really replying to an opponent who does not deny the result, for he has just described him as saying "It is indeed possible, but by the grace of God." How then can he be denying that possibility for which your author labours much, when he just now told him "It is possible, but by the grace of God"? But if he dismisses the opponent who already allows the result, and continues to argue with those who deny that it is possible for man to be without sin, what has it to do with us? He may argue with whomsoever he pleases, as long as he allows what can only be denied with the grossest impiety, that man cannot be sinless without the grace of God. And so he says *whoever acknowledges the result, acknowledges also the cause, whatever it be, through which man is able to be without sin, whether it be grace, or assistance, or mercy.*

* quomodo.

* qualiter.

* qualitatem

12. I confess to you, my friends, that when I read these words I was suddenly filled with joy, because he did not deny the grace of God by which alone a man can be justified. For it is this that I detest and abhor

beyond everything in the discussions of such men. But as I went on to read the rest of his argument, I began to be doubtful about him; first of all because of the illustrations that he used. He says, *For if I were to say "A man can argue, a bird can fly, a hare can run," without mentioning the means by which these acts can be done, I mean the tongue, the wings, and the feet, should I be denying the* qualities by which these functions are performed, when I acknowledged the functions themselves?* It is quite clear that he has adduced examples in which the power comes by nature; for these organs, the tongue, the wings, and the feet, have been created with such natural endowments. He has produced nothing which illustrates what we wish to teach about the grace without which no man is justified; for here the question is, not about the constitution of what is natural, but about its healing. So from this point I began with anxiety to read the rest, and discovered that my suspicions were not groundless.

* qualitates officiorum.

13. But before I come to that, notice what he said. When he was dealing with the question of the difference of sins, and had brought forward an objection to his argument as urged by some, that *certain kinds of little sins from their very number, because they often attack us, cannot all be avoided;* he replied that *if they cannot be avoided at all, they ought not to be held deserving even of a slight censure.* In saying this, he failed to notice the passages of the New Testament, where we maintain that the intention of the law which holds us guilty is that, because of our misdeeds, we may take refuge in the grace of the merciful Lord; the law being as it were a schoolmaster shutting up into the same faith which has since been revealed;

Gal. iii. 23.

that therein, not only may evil deeds be forgiven when done, but, through the assistance of the same grace, they may not be done. To those who are making progress the Way belongs, although they who make good progress may be called "perfect wayfarers." But it is the height of perfection which admits of no increase, when we begin to possess the goal of our journey.

14. Again, that remark which is made to him "Are you yourself without sin?" does not really refer to the point on which the question turns. But his reply, that *his not being without sin must be put down rather to his own negligence*, is right; only he should on that account, so as to prevent this wicked negligence getting the dominion over him, think it good to pray to God (Whom a certain person used to entreat and say "Order my steps according to Thy word, and no wickedness shall have dominion over me") lest, trusting to his own diligence as if it were his own strength, he attain not to the true righteousness, either in this life or in that in which doubtless its perfection is to be desired and expected.

15. And that other objection which some people make to him, that *it is nowhere stated in so many words in Scripture that man can be without sin*, he easily refutes by saying that *it is not a question about the exact words in which a certain statement is made.* Still perhaps there may be a good reason why, though we sometimes find in Scripture men who are said to be without blame, we do not find any who is said to be without sin, except that One alone, of Whom it is expressly said "Who knew no sin." And again in that passage, where the Apostle is discussing the priesthood, we find the words "For He experienced all

Luke i. 6.

2 Cor. v. 21.

Heb. iv. 15.

things according to the likeness without sin," that is,
Rom. viii. 3. "in that flesh which had the likeness of the flesh of sin," although it was not "the flesh of sin"; still it would not have had this likeness, if all other flesh were not "the flesh
1 John iii. 9. of sin." And the meaning of the passage, "Whosoever is born of God sinneth not, and cannot sin, for His seed abideth in him," whereas the Apostle John himself, as if
1 John i. 8. he were not born of God or were speaking to those who had not yet been born of God, clearly stated "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us"; this I have been at pains to explain as clearly as I could in the work which I have written on this subject to Marcellinus. And his statement, that *the words "cannot sin" are the same as if he had said "ought not to sin,"* is not, I think, to be objected to; for who would be mad enough to say that we ought to sin, since it is sin just because it ought not to be done?

16. I certainly do not think that that passage of the
James iii. 8. Apostle James, "But the tongue can no man tame," can be understood in the manner in which your author wanted to expound it, that *it is said as if by way of reproof, as though the Apostle meant "Is it then possible that no man can tame the tongue?" as though he were protesting and saying, "You can tame wild beasts, can you not tame the tongue?"* as if it were easier to tame the tongue than wild beasts. I do not think that this is the meaning of this passage. For if he wished to suggest the ease of subduing the tongue, the immediate context would have borne out the comparison with the wild beasts; but as it is he continues, "It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison," more harmful indeed than that of beasts

and serpents: for that slays the flesh, but the poison of the tongue slays the soul. For "the mouth that belieth, slayeth the soul." Therefore St. James did not pronounce those words as though taming the tongue were easier than taming beasts, nor did he intend them to be pronounced in such a tone of voice, but rather as shewing how great is the evil of the tongue in man, so that no man can tame it, though even beasts are tamed by men. Nor did he say it in order that we should allow the dominion of this evil over us to continue through our negligence, but rather that we should pray for the help of Divine grace to subdue the tongue. For he does not say "The tongue can no one tame," but "no man"; so that when it is tamed, we may acknowledge that this is effected by God's mercy, God's help, and God's grace. Therefore let the soul endeavour to tame the tongue, and whilst it endeavours, let it ask for help; and let the tongue pray that the tongue may be tamed, for He tames it Who said to His own, "For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father Which speaketh in you." And so, by this command, we are bidden to do a work which, though we try, we are unable to do of our own strength, and must therefore pray for God's help to effect.

Wis. i. 11.

Matt. x. 20.

17. Hence also when the Apostle had enlarged upon the evil of the tongue, saying, among other things, "My brethren, these things ought not so to be," having finished what he was saying on that point, he went on to tell them by what assistance those things which he said ought not to be done, can be avoided. "For who is wise and instructed among you? Let him shew out of

James iii. 10-17.

a good conversation his works in meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, priceless without hypocrisy." This is the wisdom which tames the tongue, coming down from above and not springing forth from the human heart. Or does anyone dare to rob the grace of God of this wisdom also, and with the vainest conceit make it lie in the power of man? Why then do we pray to receive it, if it is to be had of man? Or do they reject even this prayer, lest we should do injury to *that free choice which, by the possibility of nature, is of itself sufficient to fulfil all the precepts of righteousness?* Then the same Apostle James himself must be rejected, when

James i. 5. he advises us, saying, "But if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, That giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." This is the faith to which the commandments constrain us, that the law may command and faith may obtain. For by the tongue, which no man can tame, but the Wisdom which comes

James iii. 2. down from above, "in many things we all offend." For this passage also, as well as the other which says "The tongue can no man tame," the Apostle did not pronounce in another tone of voice.

18. Again, no one, to prove the impossibility of not sinning, should have alleged against them that passage,

"The wisdom of the flesh is emnity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be. And they that are in the flesh cannot please God." For the Apostle said "the wisdom of the flesh," not "the wisdom that cometh down from above"; and by "being in the flesh" it is clear that those are not meant who have not yet left the body, but those who live according to the flesh. But the question which is now in discussion is not there mentioned. What I want, if possible, to hear from him, is whether those who live according to the Spirit, and, on that account, even while they still live here, are already in a certain manner not in the flesh,—whether they live according to the Spirit by the grace of God, or whether they are sufficient of themselves from the capacities of their nature already given to them at creation and from their own will; since there is no fulfilling of the law but love, and the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, not by ourselves, but by the Holy Spirit, Which is given unto us.

Rom. viii. 7, 8.

Rom. v. 5.

19. He also deals with the question of sins of ignorance, and says that *a man must be very watchful against ignorance; and ignorance is culpable because it is by his own negligence that a man does not know what he might have known if he had taken the trouble;* while at the same time he argues anything rather than allow a man to pray and say, "Give me understanding that I may learn thy commandments." For it is one thing not to have taken the pains to know, and sins of negligence of this kind even seem to have been expiated by certain sacrifices of the law; it is a different thing to wish to understand and not to be able, and to act contrary to the law through

Ps. cxix. 73.

not understanding what it wishes to be done. On this account we are bidden to seek for wisdom from God, "Who giveth to all liberally," especially to all those who seek in a manner and with a constancy suitable to so great a gift.

20. He allows that *the sins which have been committed must be expiated by God, and we must entreat the Lord for them*, that is, in order to obtain pardon; for, even by his own confession, that *power of nature and the will of man*, which he praises so much, *are unable to undo what has been done*, so that in this necessity he can only pray for pardon. But that he should pray for help against sinning, he nowhere said; I have not read it in this book; there is altogether a strange silence on the subject. Yet the Lord's Prayer bids us pray for both gifts, that our debts may be forgiven us and that we be not brought into temptation; the former that our past sins may be expiated, and the latter that future sins may be avoided. And although this is not done without the will, yet the will alone is not sufficient to do it; therefore, with this object, the sacrifice of prayer to God is neither superfluous nor unseemly. For what would be more foolish than to pray that you may do what you have in your own power?

21. But now see, what touches the question most closely, how he tries to describe human nature as if it were altogether without any corruption, and how the wisdom of the word wrestles against the clearest Scriptures of God so as to make the Cross of Christ of none effect. But certainly it will not be made of none effect; that wisdom rather will be overthrown. For when we have proved this, perhaps the mercy of God will be

with him, and even he will repent that he said these words. He says, *First, we must discuss the statement that by sin nature is weakened and changed. And therefore,* he says, *before everything else, I think that we must ask what sin is: a substance of some kind? or a name altogether devoid of substance, by which is denoted not a thing, nor an existence, nor any kind of body, but the doing of a wrong deed?* Then he adds, *I believe it to be the latter. And if so,* he says, *how could that which has no substance have weakened or changed human nature?*

I pray you to notice how he unconsciously strives to subvert those most wholesome words of healing eloquence, "I said, Lord, be merciful unto me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee." What is healed if nothing is wounded, nothing hurt, nothing weakened and corrupted? But if there is anything to be healed, whence has it been corrupted? You hear the Psalmist confessing; why do you crave for a disputant? He says, "Heal my soul." Ask him by what means that has been corrupted, for the healing of which he prays; and hear what follows: "For I have sinned against Thee." Let your author examine him; let him put to him the question which he thinks must be asked, and let him say, "O thou who criest, 'Heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee,' what is sin? Is it a substance of some kind, or a name altogether devoid of substance, by which is denoted not a thing, nor an existence, nor any kind of body, but only the doing of a wrong deed?" He answers, "It is as you say: sin is not a substance of any kind, but by this name is denoted only the doing of a wrong deed." And your author replies, "Why then do you

Ps. xli. 14.

cry, 'Heal my soul for I have sinned against Thee'? How could that which has no substance have corrupted your soul?" Would not he, spent with the pain of his wound and to avoid being diverted from prayer by argument, reply briefly, "Depart from me, I beg you; argue
Matt. ix. 12 rather, if you can, with Him Who said 'They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick: I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners,' where He certainly spoke of the righteous as whole, but of the sinners as sick."

22. Do you not perceive the drift and aim of this
Matt. i. 21. discussion? It is that the words, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for it is He that shall make His people whole from their sins," should be regarded as said all in vain. For how shall He make whole, where there is no sickness? The sins, forsooth, from which the Gospel says that the people of Christ are to be made whole, are not substances, and according to your author cannot make us corrupt. O brother, it is good that you should recollect that you are a Christian. Perhaps it would be enough to believe these words; but yet, since you wish to argue, and it does no harm but rather does good if preceded by the strongest faith, let us not imagine that human nature cannot be corrupted by sin; but, believing from the Divine Scriptures that it has been so corrupted, let us inquire how this could have taken place.

Since we have already learnt that sin is not a substance, is it not evident, to omit other instances, that not to eat is also not a substance? For it is holding aloof from a substance, since food is a substance. But

to abstain from food is not a substance; and yet, if a man abstains altogether from food, the substance of the body languishes so much, is so injured by disordered health, is so exhausted by loss of strength, is so weakened and broken down by weariness, that if by any means it continues alive, it can with difficulty return to that food by abstinence from which it was corrupted. In the same way sin is not a substance, but God is a substance and the chief of substances, and the only true food of His rational creation; and when man holds aloof from Him by disobedience, and is through weakness unable to receive Him in Whom he ought to rejoice, you hear how he says, "My heart was smitten like grass and withered, for I forgot to eat my bread." Ps. cii. 4.

23. But notice how he continues to attack the truth of Holy Scripture with plausible reasonings. The Lord Jesus says—and He is called Jesus because it is He that makes His people whole from their sins—He says "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners." Matt. ix. 12. To the same effect the Apostle also says, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into this world to make sinners whole." 1 Tim. i. 15. And in opposition to the "faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation," your author says that *the contraction of this sickness was not the due consequence of sins, for if so the punishment of sin would involve the committal of more sins.*

Again this great Physician is sought for to help little children; and your author says, *What are you seeking? They for whom you seek the Physician are whole. Not even the first man himself was condemned to death on that account,*

for afterwards he did not sin. As though he has heard something afterwards of the perfection of Adam's righteousness, except that the Church mentions him also as having been freed by the mercy of the Lord Christ. *And his posterity too*, he says, *not only are not weaker than he, but even have kept more commandments, since he failed to keep one;* even though he sees this posterity born in a state in which Adam certainly was not created, not only unable to keep the commandment, of which they have no conception at all, but hardly able to take their food when they are hungry. And yet when He, Who "makes His people whole from their sins," wishes to make these children whole by His grace in the bosom of their mother the Church, men refuse, and with unsound judgment pronounce them to be sound, as if they were able to examine the condition of the creature whom He created more accurately than He can.

24. *Punishment*, he says, *is the cause of sin, if the sinner was weakened that he might commit more sins.* He does not consider how deservedly the light of truth forsakes the transgressor of the law; and when thus forsaken, he indeed becomes blind, and of necessity stumbles the more, and by falling is hurt, and, when hurt, does not rise, in order that he may listen to the voice of the law sufficiently to be warned by it to pray for the grace of the Saviour. Was that no punishment for those of whom the Apostle says, "Because when they had known God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened"? That "darkening" certainly was itself punishment and penalty; and yet through this penalty,

Rom. i. 21-31

that is, through blindness of heart, which is the result of the light of wisdom forsaking them, they fell away into more numerous and graver sins. "For, saying that they were wise, they became fools." This is a grievous penalty, if rightly understood; and, in consequence of this penalty, see whither they went. "And they changed," the Apostle says, "the glory of the uncorruptible God into the likeness of the image of corruptible man, and birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." This they did in consequence of the penalty of sin, whereby their foolish heart was darkened. And yet because of these deeds, which, although penal, are themselves also sins, he goes on to say, "Wherefore God gave them up to the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness." See how God sentenced them to a severer punishment, giving them up to the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness. See also what they do in consequence of this penalty, "That they should dishonour their bodies among themselves." And that that is the penalty of iniquity, though it is itself iniquity, he more clearly proves, saying, "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, Who is blessed for ever, Amen. For this cause," he says, "God gave them up unto vile passions." You see how often God punishes, and out of that same punishment still more numerous and more grievous sins arise. "For their women changed the natural use into that use which is against nature, and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working unseemliness." And in order to shew that these are not only sins, but also the penal-

ties of sins, he still further added, "And receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was due." You see how often He punishes, and it is the same punishment which brings forth and produces sins. Listen again, "And even as they did not like," he says, "to have God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, with deceit, wickedness, covetousness, full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, hateful to God, despiteful, proud, boastful; inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful." Now let your author say *sin ought not to be punished in such a way that through the punishment the sinner should commit more sins.*

25. He would, perhaps, reply that God does not compel men to such sins, but only forsakes those who deserve to be forsaken. If he says this, he says what is most true; for when forsaken, as I described, by the light of righteousness and so cast into darkness, what else can they bring forth except all those deeds of darkness which I have mentioned, until God says to them, if they will only obey the command, "Awake, thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." The Truth calls them "dead," (as in the passage, "Let the dead bury their dead,")—the Truth calls those dead whom your author says could not possibly have been hurt and corrupted by sin, because, forsooth, he has learnt that sin is not a substance.

Eph. v. 14.

Matt. viii. 22.

No one tells him that *man was so created that he could indeed pass from righteousness to sin, but could not return from sin to righteousness.* But in order to pass to sin, the free choice by which he corrupted himself was sufficient, while to return to righteousness, he needs a Physician because he is not whole, he needs a Quickener because he is dead. And of this grace your author says nothing at all, as if man could heal himself by his own will alone, because by it alone he could be corrupted.

We do not tell him that *the death of the body involves sin;* for in death there is only punishment, for no one sins by his body dying. But the death of the soul involves sin, when its life, that is, its God, has forsaken it; and of necessity it does dead works until it springs to life again by the grace of Christ.

Far be it from us to say that *hunger and thirst and other bodily ailments involve a necessity of sinning;* for through the discipline of these ailments the life of the righteous has shone forth more brightly, and by overcoming them with patience has attained greater glory; but this they did by the assistance of God's grace, by the assistance of God's Spirit, by the assistance of God's mercy, not by exalting themselves in proud will, but by winning strength in humble confession. For they had learnt to say to God, "For Thou art my patience." I do not know why he does not make any mention at all of this grace and assistance and mercy, without which we cannot live well; nay, rather by defending nature as *sufficient of itself for righteousness, if only the will be present,* he most openly denies the grace of Christ whereby we are justified. But why the death of the body, though it

Ps. lxxi. 5

came from sin, should remain for the discipline of faith when the guilt of sin has been removed by grace, I have already discussed, as far as I was able, in the books to Marcellinus of blessed memory.

Cf. De Pecc. Meritis et Remissione ii. 30.

26. But he says, *the Lord was able to die without sin.* To this I reply, that just as even His birth belonged to the power of His mercy, not to the order of nature; so also His death was an act of power, and this is our price which He paid to redeem us from death. And it is this that their argument tends to make of none effect, when they defend human nature in such a manner as to make free choice independent of that price for its translation from the power of darkness and of the prince of death into the kingdom of the Lord Christ. And yet when the Lord went to His Passion, He said "Behold the prince of this world shall come, and shall find nothing in Me," certainly no sin by reason of which the prince of death might claim of his own right to kill Him. "But," he says, "that all men may know that I do the will of My Father, arise, let us go hence," that is, that I do not die by the necessity of sin but by the will of obedience.

John x. 18.

John xiv. 30, 31.

27. He says that *no evil can be the cause of any good*, as if punishment were a good thing; though many, however, have been improved by it. There are, then, some evil things which do good by the marvellous mercy of God. Had he experienced some good thing who said, "Thou didst turn Thy face from me and I was troubled"? Certainly not; and yet being thus troubled was, so to speak, a remedy against his pride. For he had said in his abundance, "I shall never be moved," and was attribut-

Ps. xxx. 8.

Ps. xxx. 7.

ing to himself what he had from the Lord. For what had he that he had not received? Wherefore he had to be shown whence he had it, that in humility he might receive what he had lost in pride. Wherefore he says, "Lord, in Thy goodwill Thou hast given strength to my beauty. And I, in this abundance of mine, was saying 'I shall never be moved,' whilst I had it from Thee and not from myself. And at last Thou didst turn Thy face away from me and I was troubled." 1 Cor. iv. 7. Ps. xxx 7, LXX.

28. It is this that the proud mind does not understand at all; but great is the Lord Who will produce conviction in a way known to Himself. For we are inclined rather to seek what answers we may make to the objections against our error, than to discern how useful the objections are to heal us from error. Wherefore we must treat with them not so much by arguments as by prayers for them as well as for ourselves. For we do not say to them what your author put into the mouth of his objector, *it was necessary that sin should exist that there should be some cause for the mercy of God.* Would God, there had not been the misery to make that mercy necessary! But the heinousness of a sin which was all the greater in proportion as it was easier for man, unfettered as yet by any weakness, to avoid sin, was followed by a most just punishment, so that he received in himself the "due reward" of his sin; for, inasmuch as he had despised the first duty of obedience under his Lord, he lost the obedience of his own body, which had been placed, so to speak, under him. And because we are now born with this law of sin which wars in our members against the law of our mind, we ought neither Rom. i. 27.

to murmur against God, nor to argue against a most evident fact, but to seek and pray for His mercy on us in our state of punishment.

29. Notice very carefully how he has expressed himself, *Even in such a case as this, God applies indeed His mercy, whenever it is necessary; because after sin man needs such help, not because God willed the cause of this need.* Do you not see how he does not say that the mercy of God is necessary that we should not sin, but because we have sinned? Then he adds, *A surgeon, too, ought to be ready to heal one who is already wounded; but he ought not to wish a man who is whole to be wounded.* If this illustration suits the subject we are discussing, human nature (he must remember) cannot be wounded by sin, because *sin is no substance.* Just as, then, for an example, a man, who is lame from a wound, is put under medical treatment, that not only his past hurt may be healed, but also that his power of walking may be set right for the future; so the heavenly Physician heals our ills, not only in order that they may no longer exist, but also that for the future we may be able to walk aright, which, not even when whole, shall we be able to do unless God helps us. For when a human physician has healed a patient, he leaves him to God for the future to be sustained by the elements and bodily food, that by suitable support his regained health may grow stronger and be permanent; and these things are provided for those who live in the flesh by the same God, Who gave also the remedies which the physician applied to effect the cure. For the physician does not heal anyone by means which he himself has created, but by the resources of Him Who creates all

things necessary for the whole and the diseased. But when, through the mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ, God heals one who is spiritually sick or quickens the dead, that is, justifies the ungodly, and when He has brought him to a state of perfect health, that is, to perfect life and righteousness, He does not desert him, unless He be Himself deserted, in order that he may ever live a godly and righteous life. For just as the eye of the body, even when most perfectly sound, cannot see unless assisted by the brightness of light, so also man, even when made most perfectly righteous, cannot live uprightly unless assisted from God by the eternal light of righteousness. God's way of healing, therefore, is not only to wipe out our past sin, but also to give us the power of not sinning.

30. He is certainly clever in dealing with, and in his own opinion refuting and shewing to be false, a remark made to them that *it was even necessary for man that he should not be able to be without sin, in order to take away all occasion of pride and boasting. For*, he thinks, *it is most absurd and foolish that there should have been sin in order that there should not be sin, for pride itself is certainly sin;* as if it were not true that an ulcer is painful, and cutting it gives pain, and so pain may be removed by pain. If we had not experienced this, and were to hear of it in some country where such things never happened, we should certainly laugh the idea to scorn, perhaps even use his very words and say "It is most absurd that pain should have been necessary to remove the pain of the ulcer."

31. *But*, they say, *God is able to heal all things.* This

is indeed His work, to heal all things; but He works according to His own wisdom, and does not receive the method of treatment from the sick man. No doubt He wished to make the Apostle as strong as possible,
2 Cor. xii. 9. yet He said to him, "Strength is made perfect in weakness"; and, in spite of so many prayers, God took not from him the thorn in the flesh, whatever that was, which, he says, was given him lest he should be exalted by the greatness of the revelations. For other faults shew their power only in misdeeds; pride alone has to be guarded against even in good deeds. Where-
Phil. ii 12, 13. fore, they to whom it is said, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God Which worketh in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure," are warned lest, by attributing the gifts of God to their own power and by self-exaltation, they perish more grievously than if they did no good thing. Why, then, "with fear and trembling," and not rather with freedom from anxiety, if God worketh? Is it not that, because of our will without which we cannot work well, the thought may soon insinuate itself into the human mind that its good work is entirely its own, and it
Ps. xxx. 8. may say in its abundance, "I shall never be moved"? Therefore, He Who "in His goodwill had given strength to" such a man's "beauty," turned away His face for a moment, that he who had said this might be troubled; for it was by that very pain that that tumour was to be healed.

32. Wherefore man is not told, "It is necessary to sin that you may not sin"; but he is told, "God in a measure withdraws Himself from that of which you are

proud, that you may know that it is not yours but His, and may learn not to be proud." For is not the passage of the Apostle that I am about to refer to of such an astonishing character, that it would not be credible except that he says it himself, and his truth it is wicked to call in question? Every Christian knows that the first suggestion of sin came from Satan, and that he is the first author of all sins. And yet certain people are "delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme." How, then, is the work of Satan excluded by the work of Satan? Your author should examine these and similar statements, lest he should over-estimate the sharpness of some remarks which sound rather sharp, but on discussion are found to be very much the reverse. Why, he even adduces illustrations which have the effect rather of suggesting the answer which ought to be given him: *what more shall I say*, he says, *except that we might believe that fire puts out fire, if we could believe that sins may be cured by sins.* What if a man cannot put out fire by fire, yet pain, as I have shewn, can be cured by pain? Also, if he cares to enquire and learn, poisons can be driven away by poisons. And if he notices that feverish heat is dispersed by certain medicinal heats, he may allow, perhaps, that even fire is put out by fire.

1 Tim. i. 20.

33. *How*, he asks, *shall we distinguish pride itself from sin?* Why does he ask this, since it is clear that it also is sin? *To sin*, he says, *is to be proud, as much as to be proud is to sin. For, consider the nature of any sin you please, and see if you will find any sin which cannot be called pride.* He pursues this thought and tries to prove it as

follows: *If I mistake not, every sin is contempt of God, and all contempt of God is pride. For what is so proud as to contemn God? Therefore every sin is also pride, as even* Ecclus. x. 13. *Scripture says, "Pride is the beginning of every sin."* If he looks carefully, he will find in the law that there is a good deal of difference between the sins of pride and other sins. For many sins are committed through pride; but not every wrong act is a proud act,—acts done by the ignorant, by the weak, and, as a rule, by the weeping and groaning. And, indeed, pride, since it is itself a great sin, exists of itself without other sins, in such a manner that generally, as I have said, it is not in sins but in good deeds themselves that pride with its swifter foot overtakes and steals over us. But what he understood in a wrong sense, "Pride is the beginning of every sin," is a most true saying; for it was pride which caused the fall of the devil, from whom came the beginning of sin, and who then, in his envy, overthrows man, who was standing in the place whence he himself had fallen. For undoubtedly that serpent sought a door of boasting whereby he might enter, when he said "Ye shall be as Gods." Gen. iii. 5. That is the meaning of the words, "Pride is the beginning of every sin" Ecclus. x. 12 and "The beginning of pride is when one revolteth from God."

34. But what does he mean by saying, *Then how shall a man be subject to punishment from God for the guilt of that sin which he knows to be not his own? For it is not his own, if necessary. Or if it is his own, it is voluntary, and if voluntary, it can be avoided.* We reply, "It is his own altogether; but the corruption through which it is committed has not yet been entirely healed, and indeed that

this corruption should grow up in man at all is the result of misused health; and now whilst he suffers from it he commits many sins either from infirmity or from blindness; and for it he must pray that it may be healed and that he may then live in continual health, and not be proud, as if man were healed by the same power as that by which he was corrupted."

35. And I would say this in such a way as to confess my ignorance of the deeper counsel of God, why He does not forthwith cure pride itself, which lays its snares for the human soul even in good deeds, and for the cure of which pious souls entreat Him with tears and great groanings to stretch forth His right hand to their endeavours, so that they may overcome it and, so to speak, trample upon and destroy it. For when a man rejoices that he has even conquered pride in some good work, out of that joy pride rears its head and says, "You see I am alive, why are you exulting? and I am alive because you exult." For perhaps his delight in exulting over its conquest is premature, since, as I think, its last shadow will be swallowed up in that noonday, which is promised in Scripture, where it says, "And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy just dealing as the noonday," if the preceding words are obeyed, "Reveal thy way unto the Lord and hope in Him, and He shall bring it to pass," not as some think, that they themselves bring it to pass. When he said "He shall bring it to pass," the Psalmist seems to have been thinking of those who say "we bring it to pass," that is, we ourselves justify ourselves. In which process indeed we too work, but we work with Him while He

Ps. xxxvii. 5, 6.

works, for His mercy prevents us. But it prevents us that we may be made whole; because it will also follow us that, when made whole, we may grow. It prevents us that we may be called; it will follow us that we may be glorified. It prevents us that we may live a godly life; it will follow us that we may live with Him for ever, for
John xv. 5. "without" Him "we can do nothing." For we find
Ps. lix. 10. both statements in Scripture: both "My God, His mercy
Ps. xxiii. 6. shall prevent me," and "Thy mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." Let us, then, reveal to Him our way by confession, not praise it by defence; for if it is not His way, but ours, undoubtedly it is not right. Let us reveal it by confessing, for it is not hidden from Him even if we try to conceal it. And it is a good thing to confess to the Lord.

36. For on that condition will He give us what is pleasing to Him, if that which in us displeases Him, displeases us also.
Ps. xliii. 18. As it is written, "He will turn aside our paths from His way," and will make our way to be that which is His own;
Cf. Ps. xxxvii & sup. § 35. since this is His gift to those who believe in Him and who hope in Him that He will do it. For this is the righteous way which they who have a zeal for God but not according
Rom. x. 2-4. to knowledge are ignorant of; and seeking to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted themselves
John xiv. 6. to the righteousness of God. For Christ, Who said "I am the Way," is "the end of the law, for righteousness to every one that believeth." And yet the voice of God has sometimes alarmed those who were already walking in this way, lest they should boast themselves in it as of their own strength. For on this account the Apostle says
Phil. ii. 12, 13. to them, "Work out your own salvation with fear and

trembling, for it is God Which worketh in you both to will and to work, for His good pleasure." The Psalmist, too, for the same reason tells them, "Serve the Lord in fear, and rejoice unto Him with trembling; lay hold of instruction lest the Lord be angry and ye perish from the right way, when His wrath will soon be kindled upon you." He does not say "lest the Lord be angry and show you not the right way" or "bring you not to the right way," but when they were already walking in it, he was able to frighten them and say "Lest ye perish from the right way." Why is this except that pride, as I have so frequently said and still must often say, must be guarded against even in good deeds, that is in the right way itself, lest while a man reckons as his own what belongs to God, he lose what belongs to God and return to his own. Wherefore, let us do that with which that Psalm concludes, "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him," that is, that He may bring it to pass, that He may shew His way to Whom it is said, "Shew us Thy mercy, O Lord;" that He may give salvation to enable us to walk, to Whom it is said "And grant us Thy salvation"; that He may lead us in the same way, to Whom it is said, "Lead me in Thy way, O Lord, and I will walk in Thy truth"; that He may bring us to those promises whither the way leads, to Whom it is said, "Even thither shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall bring me"; that then He may there feed those who sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of Whom it is said, "He will make them sit down, and will come over and serve them." For in mentioning such things we are not taking away the choice of the will; but we are preaching the grace of

Ps. ii. 11, 12 LXX.

Ps. lxxxv.

Ps. lxxxvi. 11

Ps. cxxxix. 10

Luke xii. 37

God. For to whom are they of any use but to him who wills, yet wills with humility, not boasting himself of the strength of his will, as if it alone were sufficient for perfecting righteousness?

37. But far be it from us to say to him what he says some people urge as an objection to him, that *man is put on an equality with God, if it is asserted that he is without sin*, as if indeed an angel, because he is without sin, were put on an equality with God. For my part, I think that even when there shall be in us so great righteousness that nothing whatever can be added to it, the creature will not be made equal to the Creator. But if some people think that our advance will be so great that we shall be changed into the substance of God, and that we shall become exactly what He is, let them be careful how they support their opinion. I confess that it is not proved to my satisfaction.

38. Now, however, I quite agree with your author on this point, that, in answer to those who say *your assertions certainly appear reasonable, but it is a proud thing to say that man is able to be without sin*, he replies to the effect that if the assertion is true, it can in no way whatever be said to be proud. For he says with the greatest acuteness and truth, *on which side do you prefer to place humility? Most certainly on the side of falsehood, if pride exists in what is proved to be the side of truth*, And therefore he prefers, and prefers rightly, that humility should rather be placed on the side of truth, not on that of falsehood. Whence it follows that he who said "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us," should without

1 John i. 8.

hesitation be acknowledged to have spoken truly, and should not be supposed to have made this statement falsely for the sake of humility. It was on this account that he added, "And the truth is not in us"; when perhaps it would have sufficed to say "We deceive ourselves," had he not noticed that some might think it possible that he said "We deceive ourselves," because even in the case of what is really good the man who praises himself is vainly puffed up. And so by adding, "And the truth is not in us," he clearly shows (and this rightly pleases your author) that it is altogether not true "if we say we have no sin," lest humility, placed on the side of falsehood, lose the reward of truth.

39. But further, because he thinks that he is pleading the cause of God in defending nature, he does not notice that by saying that the same nature is sound, he is rejecting the mercy of the Physician. But the Saviour of nature is the same as its Creator. We must not, therefore, so praise the Creator that we are obliged, nay forced, by truth to say that the Saviour is superfluous. Let us, therefore, honour the nature of man with the praises that are due, and refer those praises to the glory of the Creator; but let not our gratitude for our creation interfere with our gratitude for our healing. Our corruptions, indeed, which He heals, we must not attribute to the work of God, but to the human will and its just punishment; but, as we allow that it was in our power to have prevented their occurring, so let us confess that their cure lies in His mercy and not in our power. This mercy and the healing help of the Saviour, your author places only in this, that He forgives sins committed in

the past, not that He helps us to avoid them for the future. Here he makes a most pernicious mistake; here, although unwittingly, he forbids us to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation, since he maintains that to prevent temptation befalling us lies only in our own power.

Matt xxvi. 41.

40. The man who knows what is sound truth does not say that *the examples of some of whom we read as having sinned, have been set forth in Scripture that they may produce a despair of not sinning and may seem in a manner to give us security in sinning;* but he maintains that they were so set forth that we may learn either the humility of repentance or that salvation is not to be despaired of even in such falls. For some, when they have fallen into sins, are lost all the more through despair, and not only neglect the medicine of repentance but become the slaves of lusts and wicked passions, to fulfil infamous and unholy desires; as if they would be the losers if they did not that which their lust prompts, since sure damnation already awaits them. Against this all too dangerous and destructive disease, the mention of the sins, into which even righteous and holy people have fallen, is of value.

41. But he seems to ask a sharp question, *In what condition must we believe that those holy men departed from this life? with sin or without sin?* So that if it be answered "with sin," damnation may be supposed to have overtaken them, which it is wicked to believe; but if it be said that they departed this life without sin, he may prove that a man has been without sin in this life, at least at the approach of death. Here he fails to notice, in spite of his acuteness, that it is not for nothing that

even righteous men say in prayer, "Forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors," and that the Lord Christ, after unfolding this prayer in His teaching, added most truly, "For if ye forgive men their sins, your Father will forgive you your sins." For through this daily spiritual incense, so to speak, offered up to God on the altar of the heart which we are bidden to "lift up," although we live not here without sin, we may die without sin if only that which is constantly being committed by ignorance or infirmity, is constantly being wiped out by forgiveness.

Matt. vi. 12.

Matt. vi. 14.

42. Then he mentions those *who are not only not said to have sinned, but are even said to have lived righteously, Abel, Enoch, Melchizedeck, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joshua the son of Nun, Phinehas, Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, Joseph, Elisha, Micaiah, Daniel, Ananias, Azarias, Misael, Ezechiel, Mordecai, Simeon, Joseph to whom the Virgin Mary was espoused, John,* and he adds the following women, *Deborah, Hannah the mother of Samuel, Judith, Esther, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, Elisabeth, and also the Mother of our Lord and Saviour, whom,* he says, *piety compels us to acknowledge to have been without sin.* Now, with the exception of the holy Virgin Mary, about whom, because of the honour due to the Lord, I wish no question at all to be raised when speaking of sins—for whence do we know what greater grace for the entire conquest of sin was conferred on her, who was deemed worthy to conceive and bring forth One, Who certainly had no sin?—with the exception, I say, of the Virgin, had we been able to assemble all those holy men and women, when they were living here, and to ask them

whether they were without sin, what answer do we suppose that they would have given? What your author says, or what the Apostle John says? I ask you, if this question could have been put to them, however conspicuous they may have been for holiness in this life, would they not
1 John i. 8. have exclaimed with one voice, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us?" Would they, perchance, have made that answer more in humility than truth? But your author prefers, and rightly prefers, *not to put the praise of humility on the side of falsehood.* Therefore, if they said this truly, they would have sin, and because they humbly made this confession the truth would be in them; but if they said it falsely, still they would have sin, because the truth would not be in them.

43. He says, *They will perhaps reply, "Could Scripture mention the sins of everybody?"* And whoever shall say this to him, will be saying what is true, nor do I see that he has made any good answer to it, although I see that he did not wish to pass it over in silence. For notice, I pray, what he said. *This,* he replies, *may rightly be said of those people, whose actions, whether good or bad, Scripture records not; but it would undoubtedly have also recorded the sins of those people whose righteousness it records, if it were conscious that in any way they had sinned.* In the case, then, of that great multitude which went before and followed the colt on which the Lord sat with shouts of praises, and which, even among enemies indignantly asking why they did this, kept crying out and saying,
Matt. xxi. 9. "Hosanna to the Son of David! blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord"—let him say, if he can, that

such great faith was not a part of righteousness. And then let him dare to say, if he can, that there was no one in that great multitude who had any sin at all. And if that is a most absurd thing to say, why has Scripture not mentioned any of their sins, while it was at pains to mention such a good deed of their faith ?

44. But perhaps he saw this himself and therefore went on to say, *Well, let it be granted that in later times, because of the number of persons, Scripture may have failed to insert an account of the sins of everybody ; what reason,* he asks, *do we give that it did not think fit to record the faults of everybody in the very first beginnings of the world, when there were only four persons ? Was it because of the great multitude, which did not yet exist ; or because it records the sins of those only who had committed sins, but could not record the sins of him who had not committed any ?* He adds yet further arguments to support this opinion more fully and clearly. *Certainly,* he says, *in the earliest period, Adam and Eve, from whom Cain and Abel were born, are said to have been the only four persons ; Eve sinned, Scriptnre has related this ; Adam also fell away ; the same Scripture has not passed it over in silence ; and that Cain sinned also, Scripture itself has testified with equal clearness ; and it not only mentions their sins, but also the nature of their sins. But if Abel had sinned as well, Scripture would doubtless have mentioned this also ; but it did not mention it, therefore he did not sin. Nay, it even shews that he was righteous. Let us, then, believe what we read ; and what we do not read, let us believe it wicked to maintain.*

45. Thus speaking, he does not sufficiently notice what he had himself said a little before : *As soon as*

the multitude of the human race had come into existence, because of the number of persons Scripture may have failed to insert an account of the sins of everybody. For had he sufficiently noticed this, he would see that even in one man the crowd and multitude of little sins either could not or, if it could, ought not to have been written in detail. For it was necessary for Scripture to observe some limit in what it recorded, and by a few examples to instruct the reader in many necessary truths. For Scripture did not care to mention even the number and names of the persons living, few though they still were—that is, how many sons and daughters Adam and Eve had and what names they gave them. (And hence some people, with little consideration of the number of things which Scripture silently passes over,
Gen. iv. 17. have supposed that Cain himself had intercourse with his mother, and thus begat the posterity which is mentioned, supposing that those sons of Adam had no sisters because Scripture did not mention them at the time, though afterwards it mentioned in a summary what
Gen. v. 4. it had omitted, namely, that Adam "begat sons and daughters," without mentioning either the time of their birth or their number or names.) In the same way it was not to be mentioned if Abel, although deservedly
Matt. xxiii. 35. called "righteous," sometimes laughed a little too freely or jested lightly, or looked at anything to covet it, or picked fruit rather too greedily, or suffered from eating a little more than was good for him, or thought of something which distracted his attention at his prayers, and how often these and similar sins overtook him. Can it be said by any chance that these are not the sins

which the Apostle bids us in general terms to avoid and check, where he says, "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body that ye should obey the lusts thereof"? Not to obey these lusts so as to do those things which are unlawful or unbecoming, we must struggle in daily and continuous combat. For indeed it is from this corruption that the eye is directed or allowed to rest where it ought not; and when this corruption grows strong and prevails, adultery is committed not only in the heart, where it takes place so much sooner because of the greater quickness of thought and the absence of all hindrances, but even in the body. Those who have to a great extent bridled this sin, that is, the appetite of corrupt affection, so as not to "obey the lusts thereof" nor present to it their members as instruments of unrighteousness, have even won the name of "righteous," and this by the help of God's grace. But because sin insinuates itself often times in the most trivial things and sometimes in unguarded moments, though they were righteous they were at the same time not without sin. Rom. vi. 12.

Lastly, if in "righteous Abel" the love of God, in virtue of which alone any one who is righteous is truly righteous, was still such as could be and ought to be increased, whatever was lacking was the result of the corruption. And in whom must there not be something lacking until he comes to that strength of God, wherein all man's weakness is swallowed up?

46. It was certainly a weighty utterance with which he concluded this passage, when he said, *Let us then believe what we read, and believe it wicked to maintain what*

we do not read, and let it suffice to have said this once for all. On the other hand, I say that we ought not to
1 Thess. v. 21. believe even all that we read, because of what the Apostle says, "Read all things; hold fast that which is good," and that it is not wicked even to maintain something which we do not read. For we can with good faith maintain as witnesses something which we have experienced, even if by chance we have not read it. To this, perhaps, he answers, "When I said that, I was speaking of the Holy Scriptures." How I wish that he would be content to maintain nothing, I do not say besides what he reads in those books, but in contradiction to what he reads, and that he would faithfully and obediently listen to what
Rom. v. 12. is written, "Through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so it passed unto all men, in whom all have sinned"; and that he would not depreciate the grace of so great a physician, by declining to acknowledge that human nature is corrupted. How I wish that, like a Christian, he would read that, except
Acts iv. 12. Jesus Christ, there is no other name under heaven whereby we must be saved; and that he would not so defend the capacity of human nature as to believe that man can be whole through free choice, even without that Name.

47. But perhaps he thinks that the name of Christ is necessary, that through His Gospel we may learn how we ought to live, and not also necessary that we may be assisted by His grace to live well. Still, on this account, let him at least acknowledge that there is miserable darkness in the mind of man, since he knows how he ought to tame a lion, and does not know how

he ought to live. Or does he think that freedom of choice and the law of nature are sufficient to enable him to know even this? This is the wisdom of word by which the Cross of Christ is made of none effect. But since that Cross cannot be made of none effect, He Who said, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise," has verily overthrown that wisdom by the foolishness of preaching, whereby believers are healed. For if *natural possibility* is through freedom of choice able of itself both to know how man ought to live, and also to live well, then Christ died for nought, then hath the offence of the Cross been made of none effect. Why should I not, in my turn, now call out? Yea, I will call out, and with Christian sorrow will I chide them, "Christ is become of none effect unto you whosoever of you are justified by nature: ye are fallen from grace." For, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and wishing to establish your own, ye have not submitted yourselves to the righteousness of God. For as Christ is the end of the law, so also is He the Saviour of corrupted human nature, for righteousness to everyone that believeth.

1Cor.i.17-21

Gal. ii. 21.

Gal. v. 11.

Gal. v. 4.

Rom. x. 3-5.

48. But, with regard to the the text which he made his opponents quote against him, "For all have sinned," it is clear, as he says, that *the Apostle was speaking of those who were then alive, that is of Jews and Gentiles.* But certainly the text which I have quoted, "Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and so it passed unto all men, in whom all have sinned"—that passage includes both the past and the present, both ourselves and our posterity. He alleges also the following passage to prove that when "all" are mentioned, we

Rom. v. 12.

must not always understand "all without any exception
Rom. v. 18. whatever." "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of One, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life." *Now there can be no doubt*, he says, *that by the righteousness of Christ, all have not been sanctified, but only those who have been willing to obey Him and have been made clean by the washing of His baptism.* He certainly does not prove what he wishes by this text. For just as by the words, "As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation," it is intended that no one should be excepted, so also by the words, "By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men to justification of life," no one is excepted. Not that all do believe in Him and are washed with His baptism, but that no one is justified unless he believes in Him and is washed with His baptism. Therefore, the word "all" is used lest it should be believed that any one can be made whole by any other means except through Him. Just as when one schoolmaster has been appointed in a town, it is quite correct to say "He teaches all here," not because all the citizens learn, but because no one learns unless he teaches him; so no one is justified unless Christ justifies him.

49. *Well*, he says, *I will allow that Scripture testifies that all have been sinners. For it states what they have been, not that they could not have been different. Wherefore*, he says, *even if all men could be proved sinners, still that in no way injures our position; for we are maintaining not so much what men are, as what they might be.* Here he does well
Ps. cxliii. 2. to allow at last that in the sight of God "no man living

shall be justified." He contends, however, that the discussion is not on that point, but on the simple *possibility* of not sinning, on which point we, on our part, have no need to dispute with him. For I am not very anxious about the question whether in this life there have been, are, or can be, certain persons, who have had, or have, or shall have, the perfected love of God which could admit of no increase (for that is the truest, fullest, most perfect righteousness); because I do not think it right to dispute overmuch as to when, or where, or in whom, that has taken place which I admit and maintain to be possible when the will of man is assisted through the grace of God. Nor do I argue about the *possibility* itself; since, when the will of man has been healed and assisted, the *possibility* itself, together with its realization, arises in the saints, while, by the Holy Spirit Which is given unto us, the love of God is being shed abroad in our hearts in the fullest measure that our healed and cleansed nature can contain. Therefore the cause of God (which he identifies with the defence of nature) is more truly pleaded when God is acknowledged both as Creator and also as Saviour, than when by defending the work of the Creator, as if it were whole and of unimpaired powers, the aid of the Saviour is made of none effect.

Rom. v. 5.

50. But what he says is true, *That God, Whose goodness is as great as His justice, made man with such powers that he could keep free from the evil of sin, had he but willed it.* For who does not know that man was made whole and blameless, and was endowed with free choice and with a free power to live righteously? But now the question is about that man whom the robbers left half dead on the

road, and who, maimed and stabbed with grievous wounds, cannot go up to the height of righteousness in the same manner as he was able to go down from it; and who, even if he is now in the inn, is still being cured. God does not, on that account, command impossibilities; but by His commands He bids you both to do what is possible to you, and to pray for what is not possible to you. But now let us see whence comes this possibility and want of possibility. He says, *By his will man is not that which by his nature he is able to be.* I say, "By his will indeed man is not righteous, if by his nature he is able to be: but by the remedy he will be able to be that which by his corruption he is not able to be."

51. What need, then, is there for us to waste our time on further details? Let us come more closely to the point which, in this enquiry at any rate, is the only, or almost the only, one on which we are at issue with them. For, as he says himself, *it is of no use to our present purpose to enquire whether there have been, or are, some men in this life without sin, but whether there could have been, or can be, such men;* so on my part, even if I allow that there have been or are such men, still I assert that by no means whatever can they have been, or can they be, so, unless they have been justified by the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, and Him crucified. For the righteous men of old were healed by the same faith which heals us also,
1 Tim. ii. 5. the faith, I mean, in the Mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ; faith in His blood, faith in His Cross, faith in His Death and Resurrection. "Having,
2 Cor. iv. 13. therefore, the same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore we speak."

52. But when this point, on which to Christian hearts he seems truly unbearable, is brought against him, let us notice his answer. For he says, *But, you will say, it is this which troubles many people, that you do not maintain that it is by the grace of God that man can be without sin.* This is exactly what troubles us; this is what we bring against him. He states the very point: it is the very thing which is most hard for us to bear. Because of the love which we feel to others and to ourselves, we cannot endure the discussion of such subjects in this way by Christians. Let us then hear how he clears himself from this allegation. *O the blindness of the ignorance,* he cries, *O the dullness of the stupid mind, which supposes that something which it is told ought only to be attributed to God, is maintained to be without the grace of God!* If we did not know what follows, and had heard only this statement, we should suppose that we had believed a false report about them, on the suggestion of rumour and the assertions of some of our brethren who were trustworthy witnesses. For what could be more concise and true than that the possibility of not sinning, however great it be or shall be in man, ought only to be attributed to God?

53. This we also say: let us shake hands. Or must we hear the rest? We must certainly hear it, and then correct it or guard against it. *For,* he goes on, *when it is said that the ability does not at all belong to human choice, but to the Author of our nature, that is, to God, how is it possible that that which is stated to belong of right to God, should be understood to be without the grace of God?* Now his meaning begins to come out; but, lest we should happen to make a mistake, he unfolds it more fully and clearly. *But,*

he says, *to make this more evident, we must discuss the point a little more fully. For we say that the possibility of each thing lies not so much in the power of human choice as in the necessity of nature.* He illustrates his meaning also with examples or similitudes. *For instance,* he says, *I am able to speak: my being able to speak does not depend on me; my speaking does depend on me, that is on my own will; and since my speaking depends on me, I am able to do both, that is both to speak and not to speak; but since my being able to speak does not depend on me, that is on my choice and will, I must necessarily always be able to speak; and if I should wish not to be able to speak, still I cannot be unable to speak, unless, perhaps, I remove that member by which the function of speaking can be performed.* Many ways, indeed, might be mentioned by which a man, if he wishes, may remove from himself the *possibility* of speaking, without removing the member by which we speak. If, for example, something is done which will take away the voice, a man will not be able to speak, although he still has his members (for the human voice is not a member); or indeed it might be done by damaging some inner member without removing it. But lest I should appear to quibble, and should meet with the captious reply that "to damage is the same as to remove"; we might, indeed, bring about the same result by having the mouth so fastened and gagged by bandages that we should be utterly unable to open it, and not have it in our power to get it opened, although it was in our power to have it shut; and this without taking away or hurting any of our members.

54. But what has this to do with us? Let us see what he works out of it. *For,* he says, *whatever is determined by*

a necessity of nature, is out of the region of the choice of the will and of deliberation. About this, too, there is some question. For it is very absurd to say that it does not belong to our will that we wish to be happy, just because by some good determination of nature we are altogether unable not to wish it. Nor dare we say that God has not a will, but a necessity, for righteousness, just because He cannot wish to sin.

55. Notice also what follows. *This*, he says, *can be observed also with regard to hearing, smelling, or seeing, that to hear, to smell, and to see, is in our power; but to be able to hear, or to smell, or to see, is not in our power, but lies in a natural necessity.* Either I do not understand what he means, or he himself does not. For how is the possibilty of seeing not in our power, if the necessity of not seeing is in our power? For blindness is in our power, and by blindness we may, if we wish, take from ourselves the very possibility of seeing. And how is it in our power to see if we wish, when, even if the perfection of the structure of the body and of the eyes remains unimpaired, in spite of our will we are unable to see, either at night time when lights, which are things external to us, have been removed, or when we are shut up in some dark place? Again, if our being able or not able to hear is not in our power, but depends on the necessity of our nature, whilst hearing or not hearing is, that is, depends on our own will, how is it that he does not notice what a number of things we hear againt our will, which penetrate to our sense of hearing even when our ears are stopped up—for instance the screeching of a saw or the squealing of a pig close to us? And although the stopping of our ears shews that it is not

in our power not to hear when our ears are open; yet such a stopping as would take away our very sense of hearing puts it in our power even to be unable to hear. And is he not rather careless in what he says about smell, that *our being able or not able to smell is in our power*, that is, in free will? For when we are placed in the midst of strong and unpleasant odours, if we are placed there with our hands tied, and still possess the completeness and soundness of our organs, we may wish, but are quite unable, not to smell: for when we are obliged to take breath, we at the same moment inhale also the odour which we do not wish.

56. Just as, then, these illustrations are false, so also is the purpose for which he wished to use them. For he proceeds to say, *Therefore we must in the same way understand about the possibility of not sinning, that not sinning is ours, but being able not to sin is not ours.* Were he speaking of that perfect and sound human nature, which we have not yet ("For we are made whole by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope; but if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it"), still he would not be right in saying simply that *not sinning is ours*, although sinning would be so; for even then there would be the assistance of God, and He would give Himself to those who wish to receive Him, as a light to sound eyes, to help them to see. But since he is arguing about this life, where "the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things," I wonder with what conscience he can suppose that, even without the assistance of the medicine of our Saviour, not sinning is ours; and can maintain

Rom. viii. 24, 25.

Wisd. ix. 15.

that to be able not to sin belongs to our nature, which is clearly so corrupted that its blindness in this respect is the sign of a deeper corruption.

57. *Since not sinning*, he says, *is ours, we are able to sin and not to sin.* What if some one else were to say, "Since it is ours not to wish for unhappiness, we are able both not to wish for it and to wish for it?" And yet we are quite unable to wish for it. For who can by any means wish to be unhappy, even though he does wish for something whereby, though he wishes it not, unhappiness must overtake him. Again, since in a far truer manner it belongs to God not to sin, shall we dare to say that He is able both to sin and not to sin? Far be it from us to say that God is able to sin. For it does not follow, as foolish people think, that He is not almighty, because He is both unable to die and also to deny Himself. What, then, do his words mean, and by what rules of logic does he try to convince us of a statement which he will not carefully examine? He adds further, *But since being able not to sin is not ours, even if we wished to be unable not to sin we could not be unable not to sin.* This is an involved and, therefore, a rather obscure statement. But he could have stated it more clearly in this way: "Since being able not to sin is not ours, whether we wish it or not, we are able not to sin." For he does not say, whether we wish it or not we do not sin; for undoubtedly we sin if we wish; but he asserts that, whether we wish it or not, we have a *possibility* of not sinning, which, he says, is implanted in our nature. Now, it can fairly be said of a man with sound feet that, whether he wishes it or not, he has the *possibility* of

walking; but if his feet are crushed to pieces, even if he wishes he has not that *possibility*. The nature of which
Ecclus. x. 9. we are speaking is corrupted. "Why is earth and ashes proud?" It is corrupted; it implores the physician; it
Ps. xii. 1. cries, "Make me whole, O Lord"; it cries, "Heal my
Ps. xli. 4. soul." Why does he stifle these cries, and thus prevent future health by defending *possibility* as though present?

58. And see what he adds to prove his statement, as he thinks, *For*, he says, *no act of will can take away that which is proved to be inseparably implanted in our nature*. Whence,
Gal. v. 17. then, those words, "So that ye cannot do the things that
Rom. vii. 19. ye would"? Whence, also, those other words, "For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I hate, that I practise"? Where is that possibility which is *proved to be inseparably implanted in our nature?* Here you see men who do not the things that they would; and he was certainly speaking about not sinning, not about flying, for they were men, not birds. Here you see a man who does not the good that he would; but the evil which
Rom. vii. 18. he would not, that he does. "To will is present" with him, "but to perfect what is good" is not present. Where is that *possibility* which is *proved to be inseparably*
Cf. 1 Cor. iv. 6 *implanted in our nature?* For whomsoever the Apostle may in a figure be transferring to himself, if he does not utter these words in his own person, it is certainly a man that he in a figure transfers to himself. But your author maintains that human nature itself has an inseparable possibility of not sinning. Now, the aim of such words (although unknown to the speaker, yet well known to him who suggests them even to Godfearing people when off their guard) is to make void the grace of

Christ, as though human nature were sufficient of itself for its own righteousness.

59. But to avert the hostile feelings wherewith Christians cry aloud on behalf of their own salvation, saying, "Why do you say that without the help of God's grace man can be without sin?" he says, *The possibility of not sinning does not itself lie in the power of choice, so much as in the necessity of nature. Whatever is based upon the necessity of nature undoubtedly belongs to the Author of nature, that is to God. How then,* he says, *is it supposed that what is demonstrated essentially to belong to God, is asserted to exist without God's grace?* Now the latent thought has found expression; it could not be hid. He attributes the *possibility* of not sinning to the grace of God, because God is the Author of that nature in which, he says, there is implanted an inseparable *possibility* of not sinning. So, then, when a man wishes to do anything, Cf. Gal. v. 17. he does it; and if he does it not, it is because he does not wish it. For where there is this inseparable *possibility*, a man cannot have weakness of will, or rather presence Rom. vii. 18. of will and lack of performance. If, then, this is so, whence come the words, "To will is present with me, but to perfect that which is good is not present"? For, if the author of this book was speaking of that nature of man which at the first was created blameless and sound, this assertion might by all means be accepted; although he ought not to have said that that nature has an inseparable or, if I may use the word, an unloseable, Inamissibilem. *possibility* since it might be corrupted, and have to seek a physician to heal the eyes of the blind man and restore the *possibility* of seeing, which had been lost through blindness.

For he is blind, I consider, because he wishes to see, but is not able; but if he wishes and is not able, the will is in him, but the possibility has been lost.

60. See further what barriers he tries to break through, if possible, so as to make a way for his own ideas. For he asks a question as in the words of an objector, *But,*
Gal. v. 17. *you will say, according to the Apostle, the flesh is contrary to us.* To this he answers, *How can the flesh be contrary to any one who is baptized, when from the words of that same Apostle we gather that such an one is not in the flesh? For thus*
Rom. viii. 9. *he says,* "*But ye are not in the flesh.*" It is good that he says that to the baptized the flesh cannot be contrary; whether this is true we will see afterwards. But now, not being able entirely to forget that he is a Christian, and having some faint recollection of it, he has retreated from his defence of nature. Where is, then, the *inseparable possibility?* Or is it perchance, that the unbaptized have not human nature? Now indeed he might wake up, and if he attends, he can do so. *How can the flesh,* he says, *be contrary to any one who is baptized?* Then to the unbaptized the flesh can be contrary. Let him explain how: for even they possess that nature which he so strenuously defends. He certainly grants that in their case at least it is corrupted, even if in the case of the baptized the wounded man has already gone whole out of the inn, or is whole in the inn whither the merciful Samaritan carried him to be taken care of. Further, if he grants that to the unbaptized at least the flesh is contrary, let him say what has happened, since both, that is, both the flesh and the spirit, are the creations of one and the same Creator, and are undoubtedly

good, because He is good. Is not this the corruptlon which has been brought upon man by his own will? And to cure this corruption in nature, he needs as Saviour the same person Who, as Creator, gave his nature its origin. If we confess that this Saviour and His healing power wherewith the Word became flesh that He might dwell in us is needed by small and great, that is, from the wailing of infancy to the hoar hairs of old age, all the controversy between us has melted away.

61. Now then let us see whether we read that the flesh is contrary to the baptized also. Here I ask, to whom did the Apostle say, "The flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye do not the things that ye would"? He wrote it, I believe, to the Galatians; and to them he says, "He therefore That supplieth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you doeth He it by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?" Hence it is clear that he is speaking to Christians, and to men to whom God had supplied the Spirit, therefore to those who were also baptized. You see that to the baptized also the flesh is found to be contrary, and that they have not that possibility which is said to be inseparably implanted in our nature. What becomes of his words, *How can the flesh be contrary to any one who is baptized?* Let him assign what meaning he will to "flesh" (for, in truth, it is not the nature of the flesh, for that is good, but the carnal corruptions which are called by the name of "flesh" in this passage), still you see that to the baptized also the flesh is contrary; and in what manner contrary? So that "they do not the things that

Gal. v. 17.

Gal. iii. 5.

they would." There, you see, the will is present in man; where is that possibility of nature? Let us acknowledge
Rom. vii. 24, 25. that grace is necessary; let us cry out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And let us hear the answer, "The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

62. For when they are asked most properly, "Why do you say that man can be without sin without the help of God's grace?" it is not a question of the grace wherewith man was created, but of the grace wherewith he is made whole through Jesus Christ our Lord. For the faithful say in their prayers, "Bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." If they have the possibility, why do they pray? Or from what evil do they pray for deliverance, if not above all from the body of this death, whence naught but the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord delivers us? Certainly it is not from the substance of the body that they pray for deliverance, for that is good, but from carnal corruptions, from which man is not freed without the grace of the Saviour, not even when by the death of the body he leaves the body. And what had the Apostle said before, leading up to this
Rom. vii. 23. passage? "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin, which is in my members." There you see what corruption of human nature was brought about by the disobedience of the will. Let that corruption be allowed to pray that it may be healed. Why does it vaunt itself so much about the *possibility* of nature? It is wounded, hurt, injured, lost; it needs true confession, not false defence. Therefore, let the grace

of God be sought for, not the grace of creation, but the grace of restoration ; and it is this grace alone which, by his silence, he emphatically declares to be unnecessary. Had he said nothing at all about the grace of God, had he not set forth this question to be solved with a view to removing hostile feeling on this point, it might be supposed that he held what is true, although he did not assert it; for everything cannot be said on every occasion. He started the question about grace ; he gave the answer which he had in his mind ; the question is settled, not as we wished, but we are no longer in doubt as to his opinions.

63. Then with many quotations from the Apostle he tries to prove a point on which there is no controversy, that *the word "flesh" is often used by the Apostle when he wishes you to understand not the substance but the works of the flesh.* What has this to do with the matter ? The corruptions of the flesh are contrary to the will of man ; nature is not accused ; but it is for the corruptions that the Physician is sought. What is the meaning of what follows, when he asks, *Who made man's spirit ?* and answers himself, *God, without doubt ;* and, again asks, *Who made his flesh ?* and again answers, *The same God, I believe ;* and asks a third time, *Is the God Who created both good ?* and answers, *No one doubts it ;* and once again asks, *And is each of the works which the good Maker created, good ?* and to this answers, *That must be granted ;* and then concludes, *Therefore, if both the spirit is good and the flesh is good, as being made by a good Creator, how can it be that two good things can be contrary to one another ?* I forbear to say that the whole of this argument would be upset if

he were asked, "Who made heat and cold?" for he would answer, "God, without doubt." I do not ask many questions: let him decide whether these can be said to be not good, and whether they are not yet clearly contrary to one another. To this, perhaps, he says, "These are qualities of substances, not substances." Just so, that is true; but they are natural qualities, and undoubtedly belong to the creation of God; moreover, substances, water and fire for instance, are not said to be contrary to one another in themselves but in their qualities. What if it be the same with the flesh and the spirit? We do not, indeed, assert this; but we made the remark to show that his argument concludes with an illogical inference. For it is possible even for contraries not to be mutually opposed, but to temper one another, and so produce a good state of health; as in the body, dryness and moisture, cold and heat, in the due tempering of which sound bodily health consists. But that the flesh is contrary to the spirit, so that we do not the things that we would, is corruption, not nature: let the medicinal grace be sought, and the controversy be at an end.

64. Besides how, in opposition to his argument, can those two good creatures of the good God be contrary to one another in the unbaptized? Or will he regret that he made even this admission, which he uttered with some feeling of Christian faith? For when he said, *How can the flesh be contrary to any one who is already baptized?* he implied that the flesh might be contrary to the unbaptized. For why did he add, *who is already baptized*, when he might have said, even without this addition, *How can the flesh be contrary to anyone?* and to prove this he

might have adduced that argument of his, that both are good, made by One Who is good, and therefore cannot be contrary to one another? Suppose, then, the unbaptized, to whom he certainly acknowledges that the flesh is contrary, press him with questions of their own and say, "Who made man's spirit?" he will answer, "God." And again they ask, "Who made the flesh?" he answers, "The same God, I believe." A third time they ask, "Is the God Who made both good?" again he answers, "No one doubts it." And if they put the one remaining question, "And is each of the works which the good Maker created good?" he will allow it. Then they will kill him with his own sword, by educing his conclusion and saying, "If, then, the spirit is good and the flesh is good, as being made by a good Creator, how can it be that two good things can be contrary to one another?" To this perhaps he will answer, "Forgive me; for I ought not to have said that the flesh cannot be contrary to anyone who is baptized, so as thus to acknowledge that it is contrary to you who are unbaptized; but I ought to have said, without any exception, that the flesh is contrary to no one." Then, you see into what a corner he drives himself; you see what a man says who will not cry out with the Apostle, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord." *But why*, he says, *should I cry out who am already baptized in Christ? Let them raise this cry, who have not received such a gift, whose words the Apostle transferred in a figure to himself; if, indeed, they say even this.* But that defence he makes of nature does not allow this cry even to the unbaptized. For

Rom. vii. 24.

it cannot be that nature is in the baptized and is not in the unbaptized. Or, if he grants that in them at least it is corrupted, so that they cry out with good reason, "O wretched man, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" and obtain help in what follows, "The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord," let him now at last allow that human nature does sometimes need Christ as a physician.

65. But I ask where nature lost that liberty which it longs to receive when it says, "Who shall deliver me?"; for the Apostle, too, does not accuse the substance of the flesh, when he says that he desires to be delivered from the body of this death, since the nature of the body, as much as that of the soul, must be attributed to the good God as its Creator. But he speaks of the corruptions of the body. For from the body the death of the body severs him; but the corruptions contracted from it cling to the soul, and to them is due a just punishment, which the rich man found even in hell. From these corruptions clearly he could not deliver himself, who says, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But wherever he lost that liberty, surely that possibility of nature is inseparable; he has the power by the supply of nature, he has the will by free choice; why does he seek the sacrament of baptism? Is it because of sins which he has committed, that only those acts which cannot be undone may be pardoned? Forgive the man: he must still cry out as before. For he desires not only that by pardon he may escape punishment for what is past, but also that for the future he may be brave and strong so as not to sin. For he delights in the law of

Rom. vii. 22-24.

God after the inward man, but he sees another law in his members warring against the law of his mind; he sees that it is there, he is not recollecting that it was; it is by present troubles that he is oppressed, not the past that he is calling to remembrance. And he does not see it only warring, but also bringing him into captivity under the law of sin, which is, not which was, in his members,. Hence he calls out, "O wretched man, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Allow him to pray, allow him to implore the assistance of the most Mighty Physician. Why forbid him? Why cry him down? Why is a wretched man prevented from seeking the mercy of Christ, and that by Christians? For just in the same way they were walking with Christ, who tried to prevent the blind man from crying for light, but even amid the tumult of the gainsayers Christ hears his cry. From Him too comes this other answer, "The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

66. Moreover, if we obtain even the concession from them that the unbaptized may implore the help of the Saviour's grace, this indeed is no little to set against that false defence of the supposed self-sufficiency of nature and the power of free choice. For he is not self-sufficient who says, "O wretched man who shall deliver me?" nor can he be said to have full freedom, who still prays to be delivered. But let us consider this further point, whether the baptized do the good which they would, without any desire of the flesh warring against them. Now, your author himself states what we should say on this point, where at the conclusion of this passage he says, *As we have said, the text which contains the words,*

"*The flesh lusts against the spirit,*" *must be understood not of the substance, but of the works, of the flesh.* This we also maintain, that it is said not of the substance, but of the works of the flesh, which proceed from the desire of the flesh, that is, from sin, with regard to which the Apostle enjoined us that it should not reign in our mortal body
Rom. vi. 12. that we should obey the lusts thereof.

67. But let him notice, also, that the words were addressed to those who were already baptized: "The flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, so that ye do not the things that ye would." And lest he should make his readers laggards in this fight, and should seem by this statement to have given some
Gal. v. 18. indulgence for sin, the Apostle adds, "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are no longer under the law." For he is "under the law" who is conscious that he abstains from the work of sin through fear of the punishment which the law threatens, not through love of righteousness; he is not yet free from, or a stranger to, the wish to sin. For he is guilty in the very wish which makes him prefer, if it were possible, that the object of his fear did not exist, so that he might be free to do what he secretly desires. Hence he says, "If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are no longer under the law," the law, that is, which inspires fear and does not bestow love: for the love of God
Rom. v. 5. is shed abroad in our hearts, not by the letter of the law, but by the Holy Spirit, Which is given unto us. This is "the law of liberty," not of slavery, for it is the law of love not of fear; and of this the Apostle James also
James i. 25, says, "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty." Wherefore, also, S. Paul was no longer, indeed, frightened

like a slave by the law of God, but he delighted in it after the inward man: yet he still sees another law in his members warring against the law of his mind. And so he says here, "If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not now under the law." Just so far as any one is led of the Spirit, so far he is not under the law; because in as far as he delights in the law of God, he is not under the fear of the law, for "fear hath torment," not delight. 1 John iv. 18.

68. Wherefore, if we think rightly, we ought not only to give thanks because our members have been healed, but we ought also to pray that they may be healed, so that we may enjoy the most complete health which admits of no increase, the perfect sweetness of God, the perfect liberty. For we do not refuse to acknowledge that human nature can be without sin, nor ought we in any way to deny that that can be perfected, inasmuch as we do not deny that it progresses, but it must be by the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. We say that human nature may become righteous and happy by the help of Him by Whom it was called into being. Therefore, he finds an easy answer to the objection which, he says, some people urge against him, *The devil is fighting against us.* We most certainly reply to this objection in the very same words that he uses, *Let us resist him and he will flee.* "*Resist the devil,*" *says the blessed Apostle,* "*and he will flee from you.*" *From these words we may notice how little he can hurt those from whom he flees, and what little power we can suppose him to possess who is able to hurt those only who do not resist him.* These are my words also; for nothing could be more true. But there is this difference between us and them, that even in resisting James iv. 7.

the devil we do not only not deny, but we even insist that the help of God must be sought; but they attribute so much power to the will that they rob piety of prayer. For it is just in order that we may resist the devil and that he may flee from us, that we say in our prayers,
Matt. vi. 13 "Bring us not into temptation"; for the same reason also we are warned as by a commander exhorting his
Mark xiv 38 soldiers and saying, "Watch ye and pray lest ye enter into temptation."

69. And to those who say, *And who would not wish to be without sin if this had been placed within the power of man?* he indeed argues rightly, that *by this very fact that many or all wish it, they confess that it is not impossible;* but let him acknowledge by what power it is possible, and we are at peace. For the power is this very grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, by which he absolutely never would say that we are helped not to sin in answer to our prayers. If this happens to be his latent belief, he must excuse those who suspect otherwise. For it is he who raises the suspicion; because, when exposed to so much hostility on the subject, he chooses to believe it, without choosing to acknowledge or profess his conviction. It would have been no great thing to say it, particularly when he undertook to treat and discourse upon this point as if alleged against him by his opponents. Why did he choose to defend nature only, and why did he assert that man was so created that he had the power of not sinning if he had not wished to sin? Why did he lay down that this possibility, by which a man does not sin if he does not wish to sin, belongs to the grace of God on the ground that man was

so created? Or why would he not say anything about the fact that, by the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, nature itself is either healed because it is corrupted, or helped because it is not sufficient of itself?

70. For there may be some question among true and godly Christians whether in this world there has been, or is, or can be, any one living so righteously as not to have any sin at all; but any one who doubts that it is certainly possible after this life, is a fool. But I do not wish to quarrel even about this life. For, although I do not see that the passage "In Thy sight shall no man living be justified," and others like it, can have any other meaning, still I wish that it could be shewn, either that these texts admit of another and a better meaning, or that a perfect and complete righteousness to which nothing could be added, has both been found in some one heretofore whilst living in this body, and abides in him now, and will be in him for the future; while, however, there are still very many more who, without doubting that it is necessary for them up to the last day of this life to say with truth, "Forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors," are yet assured that their hope in Christ and in His promises is true and certain and firm. But if any shall assert either that some have attained to absolute perfection, or that anyone has attained any advance in true and godly righteousness, by any way except through the assistance of our Saviour Christ Crucified and through the gift of His Spirit, I know not whether they can rightly be reckoned as Chritians at all.

Ps. cxliii. 2.

71. And so again, those passages which he quoted, not indeed from the Canonical Scriptures, but from certain

treatises of Catholic writers, to meet the objections of those who said that he was the only supporter of these views, are of such a neutral character as to contradict neither our opinion nor his. Among them, also, he has chosen to place an extract from my books, regarding even me as of sufficient importance to be worthy of being mentioned with them. I ought not to be ungrateful for this, and I should feel the more deeply grieved that a man who has done me this honour should make a mistake.

Why should I discuss at length the first passages that he quoted, since I do not find in the book the name of their author (either because he did not mention it, or because the copy which you sent, perhaps by some clerical error, did not contain it)? Specially since I owe unqualified assent to the Canonical Scriptures alone, do I feel at liberty in dealing with the writings of ordinary men of this kind, and am in no way shaken by the passage which he has quoted from the writings of the unnamed author. It runs, *It was necessary for the Master and Teacher of virtue to be made very like man, so that by conquering sin He might teach us that man can conquer sin.* The author of this statement may have seen in what way he could explain its meaning; we, however, have no doubt that Christ had no sin in Himself to conquer, for He was born "in the likeness of the flesh of sin," not in the flesh of sin.

Rom. viii. 3. Cf. § 15.

He has quoted another passage from the same author: *And again, in order that, when He had subdued the desires of the flesh, He might teach that sinning is not a matter of necessity, but of determination and will.* If desires of unlawful lusts are not here alluded to, I understand desires of the flesh to be such as hunger, thirst, rest after

weariness and everything of that kind. For though these are faultless yet by them some men lapse into faults. This was far from being the case with the Saviour, though we see from the evidence of the Gospel that He had these desires in Himself as a consequence of the likeness of the flesh of sin.

72. He quoted the following words of the blessed Hilary: "*For unless we are perfect in spirit and changed by immortality, we shall not behold the immortality which is in God, a sight which is ordained for the pure in heart alone;*" but I know not what Hilary said in opposition to what we say, or how he helps your author, except that he bore witness that man can be pure in heart. And who denies this? But it is by the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, not by freedom of choice alone.

Also he states that Hilary said, "*What book had Job read that he should keep himself from every evil thing? For he used to reverence God with a pure mind without any taint of fault; and to worship God is a function peculiar to righteousness.*" Hilary said what Job had done, not what he had perfectly done in this life, nor what he had either done or perfectly done, without the grace of the Saviour, of Whom also he prophesied. For even he abstains from every evil thing who has sin but does not suffer it to reign in him, who is assailed by a wicked thought but does not allow it to come to effect in action. But not to have sin is one thing; not to obey its desires is another. It is one thing to fulfil what is commanded, "Thou shalt not desire"; and it is another, by a definite effort of self-denial, to do at least what is also written, "Go not after thy desires"; at the same time to know, however, that

Job i. 8 lxx.

Exod. xx. 16

Ecclus xviii. 30.

he can rightly fulfil neither of these commands without the grace of the Saviour. Therefore, to do righteousness is to fight an inward battle with the inward evil of desire in the true worship of God; but to perfect righteousness is not to have any adversary at all. For he who fights is both still in danger and is also sometimes smitten, even if he is not overthrown; but he who has no adversary enjoys perfect peace. And he is most truly said to be without sin, in whom no sin dwells; not the man who
Rom. vii. 20. says, because of his abstaining from evil deeds, "Now, it is not I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

73. For even Job himself is not silent about his sins, and certainly your friend rightly prefers that humility should not be placed on the side of falsehood; and therefore that which Job confesses, he without doubt confesses truly, since he is a truthful worshipper of God. And Hilary himself, in explaining the passage of the
Ps. cxix. 118 Psalm where it is written, "Thou hast despised all them that depart from Thy ordinances," says, "For if God were to despise sinners, He would indeed despise all; for no one is without sin. But He despises those who depart from Him, who are called apostates." You see how he did not say that no one *has been* without sin, as if speaking of the past, but that no one *is* without sin; and on this point, as I have said, I do not dispute. For whoever does not give way to the Apostle John,
1 John i. 8. who himself, too, does not say "If we say that we have had no sin," but "have no sin," how will he give way to the Bishop Hilary? I cry aloud on behalf of the grace of Christ, without which no one is justified, as though the free choice of nature were sufficient. Nay,

Christ Himself calls out on its behalf; let him give way to Him, when He says, "Without Me ye can do nothing." John xv. 5.

74. The blessed Ambrose, however, in the passage which your author quotes, is really opposing those who say that man cannot be without sin in this life. For he took occasion to remark this in connexion with Zacharias and Elisabeth, because in the Gospel they are said to have "walked in all the ordinances of the law blameless"; does he, however, deny that that was caused by the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord? For there is no doubt that righteous men lived by this faith, even before the passion of Him Who bestows the Holy Spirit Which is given unto us, by Which there is shed abroad in our hearts the love which alone gives righteous men their righteousness. And the same bishop bids us ask in our prayers for this Spirit (so he does not consider that will is sufficient unless helped by God), when he says in a hymn of his own, "And grants to our constant prayers to earn the Holy Spirit." Luke i. 6.

75. I, too, will quote something from the same work of Saint Ambrose, from which he quoted what he thought was worth quoting, He says, "'It seemed good to me.' It is possible that what S. Luke declares 'seemed good to' him, did not seem good to him only. For it did not seem good merely by an act of human will, but as it pleased Him Who, he says, speaks in me, that is Christ, Who by His working makes it possible that that which is good seems good to us also. For whom He pities, He also calls. Therefore when a follower of Christ is asked why he chose to be a Christian, he can answer 'It seemed good to me.' And when he says this, he does not say Luke i. 3.

that it did not seem good to God: for the will of man is prepared by God, for it is through the grace of God that God is honoured by His saints." See what your author must hold if he delights in the words of Ambrose, that "the will of man is prepared by God"; and it is no question, or at least no question of importance, who is perfected or when, provided only that there is not a shadow of doubt that that perfection is impossible without the grace of Christ.

Then what a great thing it would be that he should attend to that one clause of the words of Ambrose, which he quoted. For after saying, *For since the Church has been gathered from Gentiles, that is, from sinners, how can the spotted form a spotless Church, unless in the first place, through the grace of Christ, she be purged from transgression; and then she abstain from transgressions through the power to avoid sin?* Ambrose added a passage which for evident reasons your author was unwilling to add. For he says, "She was not from the beginning spotless, for this was impossible to human nature; but because she does not now sin through the grace of God and her own power it results that the Church is seen to be spotless." Who does not understand why your author did not add these words? Even now, in this world, our aim is that that most spotless purity, which all the saints desire, may be attained by the Holy Church, which in the future world, when she is freed from the commixture of every evil man, and from the law of sin within her resisting the law of the mind, is to lead a most pure life in the Divine eternity. But he must notice what Bishop Ambrose said in accordance with the Scriptures. She was not "from the beginning

spotless, for this was impossible to human natnre." For "from the beginning" means certainly from our birth from Adam. For undoubtedly Adam himself was created spotless: but for those who are by nature children of wrath, inheriting from him that which was corrupted in him, to be immaculate from the beginning, he stated to be impossible for human nature.

76. Also John, the bishop of Constantinople, whom he quoted, says that *sin is not a substance but a wicked act.* Who denies this? *And because it is not natural, therefore in opposition to it the law was given, and the power that comes from freedom of choice.* Who denies this either? But now we are discussing the human nature which has been corrupted; and we are discussing the grace of God by which that nature, which your author maintains to be able not to sin as if it were whole or were sufficient of itself through the choice of the will, is made whole through Christ the Physician, Whom it would not need if it were whole.

77. Also what Christian does not know that which he quotes as having been said by the most blessed Xystus, a bishop of the Roman Church and a martyr of the Lord,* "*God has granted to men the freedom of their own choice, that by living purely and without sin they may become like God.*" But to this very choice it appertains to hear and believe Him when He calls, and from Him in whom it believes, to

* S. Aug. *Retractations*, i. 42. "Certain words which Pelagius quoted as being the words of Xystus, the Roman Bishop and Martyr, I have in this book defended as if they were really the words of that Xystus: for I had supposed that they were so. But I afterwards read that they were the words of Sextus, the philosopher, not of Xystus, the Christian."

ask for help not to sin. For indeed when he says "They may become like God," that they will be so, it is by the love of God which is shed abroad in our hearts, not by the possibility of nature, not by the free choice which is in us, but by the Holy Spirit Which is given unto us.

And as regards what the same martyr says, "*A pure mind is a temple holy to God, and His best altar is a heart clean and without sin,*" who does not know that the clean heart is to be brought to this perfection, while the inward man is renewed from day to day, yet not without the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord? Also in saying *The man, who is chaste and sinless, has received power from God to be the son of God,* he indeed admonished us lest when anyone has become thus chaste and sinless (where and when this can be perfected in him is a question, but a good question for godly people, who are certain indeed that it is possible, but that it is not possible without the Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus)—still, as I had begun saying, Xystus wisely admonished us, lest, when any one has reached this character and is therefore rightly reckoned among the sons of God he should be supposed to have of himself the power which he has received from God through grace. For he could not possess it in his nature already corrupted and depraved, as we read in the Gospel, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God:" this they certainly were not by nature, nor would they have been so at all, unless by receiving Him they had obtained such power through His grace. This is the power which is won by the courage of love, and this love is in us only by the Holy Spirit Which is given unto us.

John i. 12.

78. But about the words of the venerable presbyter Jerome in the passages quoted from his exposition of the words "*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*," *that is, they whom no consciousness of sin convicts*, to which he added, *the pure One is beheld by the pure in heart, that which is polluted cannot be a temple of God*, that is indeed what is our aim by striving, working, praying, intreating to be brought, by the grace of Jesus Christ our Lord, to that perfection in which we may behold God with a pure heart.

Also what he quotes from the same presbyter, "*God created us with freedom of choice, and we are drawn by necessity neither to virtue nor to vices; otherwise, where there is necessity, there is no crown*;" who would not acknowledge this? Who would not embrace it with his whole heart? Who would deny that human nature was created different from what it is now? But in right action there is no bond of necessity, for the gift of love is liberty.

79. Come back therefore to the Apostle's words, "The love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit Which is given unto us." By Whom, if not by Him Who "ascended on high," and "led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men"? But man must know that there may be a certain necessity of sinning arising from the corruptions of nature, not from its constitution; and to free himself from that necessity, let him learn to say to God "Bring Thou me out of my necessities." For even in such prayer there is a battle with the tempter who is fighting against us about that necessity; and so when grace through Jesus Christ our Lord helps us, both this baneful necessity will be removed and full liberty will be bestowed.

Rom. v. 5.

Eph. iv. 8.

Ps. xxv. 17.

80. Let us come to ourselves. *Bishop Augustine also*, he says, *in his books about Free Choice, writes*, "*Whatever that cause of the will be, if it cannot be resisted, it is not sinful to yield to it; if it can be resisted, it must not be yielded to, then there will be no sin. But if it happens to deceive a man when off his guard? Then let him be on his guard against being deceived. But if the deceit is so great that it is altogether impossible to guard against it? If it is, in that case there is no sin. For who can be said to sin when he does what he cannot by any means guard against? But man does commit sin; therefore it is possible to guard against it.*" I acknowledge it, the words are mine; but let him condescend to acknowledge all I said before. For I was discussing not the impossibility of righteousness, but the grace of God which through the Mediator helps us like medicine. Therefore that cause, whatever it may be, can be resisted; it evidently can. For in these words we pray for assistance when we say "Bring us not into temptation," and we should not ask for this assistance if we believed the cause could not be resisted. It is possible to guard against sin; but by the aid of Him Who cannot be deceived. While also this other prayer applies to guarding against sin, if we say truly "Forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors." For in the case of the body as well there are two ways of guarding against the evil of disease, both by taking care not to contract it, and, when contracted, by taking care to cure it speedily; let us take care not to contract it by saying "Bring us not into temptation"; let us take care to cure it speedily by saying "Forgive us our debts." So then whether it threaten us, or whether it be in us, we can guard against it.

81. But that my opinion on this subject may be sufficiently clear, not only to him, but also to those who have not read those books of mine on Free Choice which he has read, and who perchance without having read them do read this book, I must quote from those books a statement which if he would hold and insert in his writings, there would be no further controversy on the subject between us. For, immediately after those words of mine which he quoted, I myself added, and as far as possible dealt with, a point that might suggest itself, saying, "And yet even some acts done through ignorance are blamed, and are decreed worthy of punishment, as we read in the Divine records." And after adducing examples to illustrate this, I spoke also of infirmity, saying, "Some acts even when done through necessity are to be blamed, where a man wishes to do rightly and cannot. For what mean those cries 'For the good that I would, I do not, but the evil which I hate, that I do?'" And having quoted other passages of the word of God to the same effect, I go on to say, "But all these passages are the cries of men who are coming out of that condemnation of death. For if that state be not the punishment of man but his nature, none of those acts are sins." Then a little after I said, "It remains therefore that this just punishment should result from the condemnation of man. Nor is it strange that either through ignorance he has not the free choice of his will to select what it is right to do, or through the resistance of the carnal habit, which has grown up in a manner naturally through the force of the deadly inheritance, he should see what it would be right to do, and should wish, and yet be

unable, to fulfil it. For the most just punishment of sin is this, that a man should lose what he was unwilling to use aright when he could have done so without any difficulty had he wished ; and this implies that he, who knows how to act and does not act rightly, should lose the knowledge of what is right, and that he, who would not act rightly when he could, should lose the power to do so even if he would. For there are in truth those two penal visitations on every soul that sins, ignorance and difficulty. The first brings the shame of error ; the other the pain of torment. But if a man approves of falsehood instead of truth, so that he errs against his will, and from the resistance and torture of the pain of fleshly bondage is unable to refrain from the works of lust, this is not the nature of man as he was created but his punishment as condemned. But when we speak of the free will to do what is right, we are speaking of that state in which man was created." Then I proceeded to reply to the men who allege what they think a just cause of complaint because of these corruptions of ignorance and difficulty which have been passed on and transfused into the descendants of the first man. "To these," I go on to say, "I answer briefly that they should be quiet and cease to murmur against God. For they might perhaps reasonably complain if no man proved victorious over error and lust ; but since One is everywhere present ready in divers manners by means of His Creation which serves Him as its Master, to call the wanderer, teach the believer, console the hopeful, exhort the diligent, help the striving, listen to the prayerful, it is not your unwilling ignorance but your failure to pray

for the knowledge of that of which you are ignorant, which is reckoned as your fault; nor is it your fault that you do not set your broken limbs, but that you despise Him who wishes to cure you." Thus, while I exhorted them, as far as I could, to an upright life, I did not make of none effect the grace of God, without which human nature in its present darkness and corruption cannot be illuminated and healed. It is on this point that the whole discussion with them turns, that we are not to frustrate the grace of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord by an obstinate defence of nature. And about this nature I said also a little lower down, "Even the word itself we use, in one sense, when we are speaking strictly, of that nature of man in which at the first he was created after his kind blameless; in another sense, when we speak of that nature in which, in consequence of the punishment of man under condemnation, we are both ignorant and subject to the flesh: in the latter sense the Apostle says, 'For we also were by nature the children of wrath even as the rest.'" Eph. ii. 3.

82. If then we wish, *by Christian exhortations, to rouse and kindle minds which are cold and sluggish in striving after an upright life,* let us first of all exhort them to the faith by which they may become Christians and be in subjection to the name of Him, without Whom they cannot be whole. But if they are already Christians, and are careless about living well, let them be whipped on with terrors and excited by the praises of the rewards; in such a manner, however, that we remember to exhort them, not only to good deeds, but also to godly prayers, and to train them in such sound teaching that, when

they have begun to lead a good life, they may both give thanks for whatever they do without difficulty, and, when they find some difficulty, they may be urgent in winning from the Lord, by the most faithful and persevering prayers and with ready works of mercy, help to overcome it. But if they thus progress, I care not overmuch where and when they are made perfect in the most complete righteousness; but wherever and whenever they shall have been made perfect, I maintain that they can be perfected only by the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Certainly, when they know for certain that they have no sin, they must not say that they have sin, lest the truth be not in them, just as the truth is not in those who,
1 John i. 8. when they have it, say that they have it not.

83. But "the commandments are good" indeed, if we use them lawfully. For, by the very fact of our most strong belief that "the just and good God cannot have commanded impossibilities," we are admonished both what to do in easy matters and what to pray for in difficult matters. For to love, all things become easy; to it
Matt. xi. 30. only "the burden" of Christ "is light," or rather love itself is the one burden which is light. In this sense
1 John v. 3. it was said, "And His commandments are not grievous"; that he to whom they are grievous should consider that it could not have been said under Divine inspiration that they "are not grievous," were not a state of the heart possible to which they are not grievous; and that he should pray for what he lacks in order that he may fulfil what he is bidden. And what is said to Israel in Deuteronomy has the same meaning, if it be understood
Rom. x. 8. piously, reverently, and spiritually. For the Apostle, after

quoting the passage "The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart" (in Deuteronomy we have "in thy hands," because the hands of the spirit are in the heart), says, "that is, the word of the spirit, which we preach." Whoever, therefore, has turned, as is there enjoined, to the Lord his God with all his heart and with all his soul, will have no commandment of God that is grievous. For how is it grievous since it is the commandment of love? For either a man does not love and so it is grievous, or he does love and it cannot be grievous. But he does love if, as Israel is there admonished, he has turned to the Lord his God with all his heart and with all his soul. "A new commandment," the Scripture says, "I give unto you that ye love one another," and "He that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the law," and "Love is the fulfilling of the law." To the same effect also are those other words, "If they had walked in the good paths, they would surely have found the paths of righteousness smooth." How, then, is it said, "Because of the words of Thy lips, I have kept the rough ways," except that both are true? They are rough to fear; they are smooth to love.

Deut. xxx. 14 Cf. LXX. See Aug. Quæstt. in Deut. Lib. v. quæst. 54. Deut. xxx. 10

John xiii. 34.

Rom. xiii. 8.

Rom. xiii. 10

Prov. ii. 20. Cf. LXX.

Ps. xvii. 4. Cf. LXX.

84. Therefore love begun is righteousness begun; love increased is righteousness increased; great love is great righteousness; perfect love is perfect righteousness, but love out of a pure heart and of a good conscience and of faith unfeigned. And it will be at its greatest in this life when, for its sake, life itself is despised: but I wonder if it may not grow yet further after it has left this mortal life. But wherever and whenever it is so complete that there is nothing to be added to it, still it is not shed

1 Tim. i. 5.

abroad in our hearts by the resources which are in us, whether of nature or of will, but through the Holy Spirit Which is given unto us, Who both helpeth our infirmity and worketh with our health. For this is the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit belongs eternity and goodness, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE ACCOUNT OF THE PROCEEDINGS AGAINST PELAGIUS.

1. After I had received, holy Father Aurelius, the Acts of the Council, in which Pelagius is pronounced Catholic by fourteen bishops of the province of Palestine, I no longer hesitated to enter upon a fuller and more confident discussion of his defence. For I had already read this defence in a short document, which he had himself sent me. As, however, I had received therewith no letter subscribed with his name, I was afraid that there might be found some discrepancy between my language and the account authorised by the bishops, and that Pelagius might assert that he had not sent me the document. In which case, since he could not easily be convicted of falsehood on the authority of one witness, I feared that I rather might be found guilty, by those who supported him in that assertion, either of deliberate forgery or, to express it more mildly, of rash credulity. But now, since my discussion is based upon the evidence of the official account, and there is no longer, I imagine, any doubt whether Pelagius used such language in his defence, your Holiness and all my readers will more easily and more surely form their judgment both concerning his defence and my present work.

2. In the first place, then, I cannot find words to express the gratitude I feel towards the Lord God, my Ruler and Protector, because the opinion which I held concerning our holy brethren and fellow-bishops, who sat as judges in that cause, has not proved false. For it was quite right that they should approve of his answers, for they were not concerned with the way in which Pelagius had expressed the impugned statements in his works, but with his answers about them in this trial. For there is a great difference between a question of unsound faith and one of an unguarded expression.

Now there were certain statements of Pelagius objected to in the indictment which had been handed in by our holy brethren and fellow-bishops of Gaul, Heros and Lazarus, and recited from it at the Council, (for they were unable to be present on account of what we have afterwards learnt to be a serious illness of one of them). Among these statements the first is a passage which occurs in a certain book of his, that *a man cannot be without sin, unless he has the knowledge of the law.* When this was recited, the Synod asked, *Is this your statement, Pelagius?* To which he replied, *The words indeed are mine, but I did not mean them in the sense in which my accusers understand them; I did not mean that he cannot sin, who has the knowledge of the law; but that man is helped to be without sin by the knowledge of the law, as it is written, "He gave them the law to help them."* When they had heard this, the Synod said, *What Pelagius has said is not contrary to the teaching of the Church.* Certainly the reply of Pelagius was not contrary, but the quotation made from his book sounds as though it meant something else. But this meaning the bishops, being Greeks, and hearing

Is. viii. 20. Cf. LXX.

the quotation translated by an interpreter, did not care to discuss; regarding only what he who was under examination said that he had thought, not in what words that thought was expressed in his book.

3. For to say that a man is helped to be without sin by the knowledge of the law is a very different thing from saying that a man cannot be without sin unless he has the knowledge of the law. For we see, for example, corn threshed even without the usual threshing instruments, though these are helpful if we have them; we see that boys can go to school without slaves to take them, though the help of slaves for this purpose is of great use; we see many recover from illness without physicians, though the help they can give is obvious; we see men live upon other kinds of food without bread, though no one would deny that the help of bread is of very great value; and many other similar cases will easily occur to the mind without our mentioning them. Such instances show us clearly that there are two kinds of help. The one kind consists of those things without which the purpose towards which they help cannot be effected; for example, no one sails without a ship, or speaks without a voice, or walks without feet, or sees without light, and many other things of the same sort. To this kind belongs the fact that no one lives rightly without God's grace. The other kind of help consists of those which help us in such a way, that even without them, the purpose for which we want them may be effected in some other way; just as the things which I mentioned, the instruments for threshing corn, the slave to take the boy to school, the medicine prepared by human art for regaining health, and other things of the kind. We ought

therefore to ask, to which of these two kinds the knowledge of the law belongs, or in other words, how it helps man to be without sin.

If it helps him in such a way that without it sinlessness cannot be realised, then not only the answer of Pelagius at his trial, but also the statement in his book, is true. But if the knowledge of the law only helps in such a way as to be of use if a man has it, but that without it the purpose towards which it helps may be effected in some other way; then the answer of Pelagius in the trial, which rightly pleased the bishops, namely, that *man is helped to be without sin by the knowledge of the law*, is true; but not so his statement in his book that *man is not without sin, unless he has the knowledge of the law*. This statement his judges left undiscussed, because they were ignorant of the Latin language, and were content with the confession which the defendant made, especially since there was no accuser present to compel the interpreter to expound and make plain the language of his book, and show what that was which with good reason roused the indignation of the brethren.

For there are very few who are skilled in the law, but the great multitude of Christ's members scattered in all directions, and unskilled in the law which is so profound and multiplex, are commended by the piety of their simple faith and their firm hope in God and their sincere love, and endowed with these gifts they trust that they can be cleansed from sin by God's grace through Jesus Christ our Lord.

4. Pelagius might reply to this objection that by *the knowledge of the law without which man cannot be free from sin*, he meant that knowledge, which by the teaching of

the faith is presented to neophytes and children in Christ, in which too candidates for baptism are catechized that they may know the Creed. If so we must maintain that that is certainly not what is usually meant, when a person is said to have a knowledge of the law, but rather that knowledge which is implied in the phrase *skilled in the law*. But let us suppose that by *the knowledge of the law* he did refer to the words, few in number but great in power, which are faithfully delivered by the custom of all churches to candidates before baptism, and he were to declare that in saying that *man is not without sin, unless he has the knowledge of the law* he meant the law which is of necessity delivered to believers before they receive the actual remission of sins. Even so he would be beset by a countless number of baptized children, not arguing with him but wailing, and they would cry out, not with words, but by their very innocence which cannot lie: "What is this, what is this which you have written, that a man cannot be without sin, unless he has the knowledge of the law? Lo here are we a great flock of lambs without sin, and yet we have no knowledge of the law." Surely they by their silent tongues would compel him to be silent, or rather they might perchance compel him to acknowledge that either now he has been argued out of that perversity, or at least that, while holding from the first the opinions which he maintained in the ecclesiastical tribunal, he had not expressed his opinion with due care, and that therefore his faith must be approved, his book corrected. "For there is," as it is written, "one that slippeth in his speech and not in his heart." If he had said this, or should say it, who would not readily pardon the unguarded and careless expressions which he

Ecclus. xix. 16.

wrote, since he would not be defending the opinion which those words imply, but would be declaring that to be his opinion, which is approved by truth? This we must believe was the opinion of the pious judges, even supposing that his statement in his Latin book was carefully interpreted, and that they were able sufficiently to understand its meaning, just as they easily understood his answer uttered in Greek, and declared that it was not contrary to the teaching of the Church. But let us consider other matters.

5. The Synod of bishops went on to say, *Let another* * capitulum. *sentence** *be read*, and it was read that in the same book Pelagius had asserted that *all are governed by their own will.* When this was read Pelagius answered, *This, too, I said because of free choice, which God helps when it chooses good; but man when he sins is himself to blame, as being endowed with free choice.* When they heard this the bishops said, *This, too, is not contrary to the teaching of the Church. For who would condemn or deny free choice, when with it is proclaimed the help of God?* Therefore the bishops were right in approving of the opinion which Pelagius expressed in his answer; while nevertheless the brethren who knew what arguments he and his followers are accustomed to use against God's grace, were certainly right in being vexed with the statement in his book that *all are governed by their own will.* For this statement was intended as though it meant that God governs no one, and that the passage was written Ps. xxviii. 9. in vain which says, "Save Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance, and govern them and lift them up for ever," * reguntur. that they may not remain, that is, if they are governed* by their own will without God, "as sheep not having a

shepherd;" which God forbid! Now there is no doubt that to be acted upon* means something more than to be governed; for he who is governed is himself an agent,* and he is governed by God to act rightly; but he who is acted upon is hardly understood by that phrase to be an agent; and yet, nevertheless, the grace of God gives so much power to our wills, that the Apostle does not hesitate to say, "as many as are acted upon* by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Nor can free will have any better action* within us, than to commend itself to Him to be acted upon, for He cannot act what is evil; and, when it has done this, to have no doubt that it was helped to do it by Him, to Whom it is said in the Psalm, "My God, His mercy shall prevent me."

* agi.

* aliquid agit

* aguntur. Rom. viii. 14

* aliquid melius agere

Ps. lix. 10.

6. And then in that book in which Pelagius wrote those sentences,* after the statement that *all are governed by their own will* and that *each is left free to his own desire*, he quoted some passages of Scripture which make it evident that man ought not to entrust himself to his own government. For the Wisdom of Solomon says on this point, "I myself also am a mortal man, like to all of the earthly race of him, that was first made;" and going on to the end of the passage we find, "All men therefore have one entrance into life, and the like going out; wherefore I desired, and understanding was given me, and I called upon God and the Spirit of wisdom came to me." Is it not as clear as daylight, how he, considering the misery of human frailty, dared not entrust himself to his own government, but desired, and there was given him the understanding concerning which the Apostle says, "but we have the understanding of the Lord," and

* capitula.

Wisd. vii. 1.

Ibid. 6, 7.

he prayed, and there came upon him the Spirit of wisdom? For by this Spirit, not by the strength of their own will, are they who are the sons of God governed and acted upon.*

* aguntur.

7. And with regard to that other quotation (which he has made from the Psalms in the same book of sentences by way of proving that all are governed by their own will), "He delighted in cursing, and it shall come upon him, and he loved not blessing, and it shall be far from him," everybody knows that is not the fault of nature as God created it, but of man's will which has departed from God. But, nevertheless, supposing he had not loved cursings and had wished for blessing. and should deny that in this very thing his will was helped by God's grace, then in his ingratitude and ungodliness he would be left free to govern himself, that when thrown down headlong without God to govern him, he might find by punishment that he was incapable of governing himself. So also in that other quotation which he has adduced under the same heading in that book, "He hath set water and fire before thee; stretch forth thy hand unto whether thou wilt; before man is good and evil, life and death, and whether him liketh, shall be given him," it is obvious that if a man reaches out his hand to the fire, and if evil and death please him, that is the work of man's will; but if he loves good and life, that is not the effect of his will alone, but he is helped by God. For the eye is sufficient of itself for not seeing, that is for darkness; but for seeing it is not sufficient of itself by its own light, unless the help of clear light be given to it from without. God forbid that they who are called according to God's purpose, whom He foreknew and

Ps. cix. 17.

Ecclus. xv. 16, 17.

predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, should be left free to their own desire to perish. For this is the fate of the vessels of wrath, which were fitted to destruction; in whose very destruction God makes known the riches of His glory on the vessels of His mercy. This is why the Psalmist, when he had said "My God, His mercy shall prevent me," immediately went on to say "My God hath made me see it * upon mine enemies." In them therefore takes places that which is written, "God gave them up to the desires of their heart," but not in the predestined, who are governed by God's Spirit, since their words are not uttered in vain, "Give me not up, O Lord, by means of my desire to the sinner.*" For it was against these very desires that we find the prayer uttered, "Take away from me the greediness of the belly, and let not the lust of the flesh take hold of me." This prayer God grants to those whom He subdues and governs; but not to those who deem themselves fit to govern themselves, and with the over-confident stiffneckedness of their own will disdain to have him for their Governor.

* *i.e.* His mercy. See S. Aug. Enarr.prima in Ps. lviii. § 20.

Rom. i. 24.

Ps. cxl. 8.

* See S.Aug. Enarr. in Ps. cxxxix. § 12. Ecclus.xxiii. 6.

8. This being so, how vexed might those sons of God have been, who know this and rejoice that they are governed and led by the Spirit of God, when they heard or read what was written by Pelagius, that *all are governed by their own will, and* that *each is left free to his own desire!* And yet because Pelagius, when interrogated by the bishops, perceived what an evil meaning those words naturally bore, and therefore answered that *he said this because of free choice*, adding that *God helps it when it chooses good; but man, when he sins, is himself to blame, as being endowed with free choice*, the pious judges approved

of this opinion also, and did not care to consider or inquire how far the words objected to were the result of carelessness, or in what sense they were used in his book. For they were satisfied with his admission that free will was so constituted that God helped it when it chose good; but when man sinned, he was to blame, because his own will was sufficient of itself for this. And so God governs those whom he helps in choosing good, and these are good governors in all things*, just because they are themselves governed by One Who is good.

* bene regunt quid-quid regunt.

9. There was likewise quoted an expression which Pelagius made use of in his book, *In the day of judgment the wicked and sinners are not to be spared, but to be burnt with eternal fire.* The brethren were vexed by this statement, and thought it right to raise an objection, because it seemed to imply that all sinners are to be punished eternally, without excepting those who have Christ for their foundation, although they build upon it wood, hay, stubble, about whom the Apostle says, "If any man's work be burnt up, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, yet so as by fire." But when Pelagius replied that *his statement was made in accordance with the Gospel, in which it is said of sinners, "These shall go into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life,"* the Christian judges could in no wise object to an opinion thus supported by the Gospel and by our Lord's words; for they did not know what, in the quotation from Pelagius's book, distressed the brethren, accustomed as they were to hear the disputations of himself or of his disciples; since, in the absence of those who handed in the indictment against Pelagius to the holy Bishop

1 Cor. iii. 11-15.

Eulogius, there was no one to press him to make any exception, or to distinguish between the sinners who were to be saved through fire, and the sinners who were to be punished eternally; for had the judges in this way understood the real reason of the objection, they would have rightly blamed him, if he had refused to make the distinction.

10. And the judges accepted the further statement of Pelagius, *If any one believes otherwise, he is an Origenist;* because the Church does very rightly to detest that opinion of Origen, namely, that even they whom the Lord says are to be punished eternally, not excluding the devil and his angels, will, a long time hence, it may be, after purgation, be released from their sins and be united in the fellowship of bliss with the saints who reign with God. This statement therefore the Synod declared to be *not contrary to the teaching of the Church*, not as Pelagius used it, but as the Gospel teaches, meaning that such wicked men and sinners as the Gospel judges deserving of such punishment are to be burnt with eternal fire, and that he who says that this punishment, which the Lord has pronounced to be eternal, can ever have an end, holds the detestable opinions of Origen. But about those sinners, who, the Apostle says, will be saved as by fire, though their work is burnt up, they expressed no opinion, because clearly no objection was raised against Pelagius about them. So then it is not inaptly that Pelagius calls the man an Origenist who says that the wicked men and sinners whom truth condemns to eternal punishment can ever be released therefrom; but on the other hand he may call by what name he pleases the man who thinks that no sinner is worthy of mercy in the

judgment of God, provided that he understands that their error is not admitted by the true teaching of the Church.

Jas. II. 13. "For he will have judgment without mercy, who hath showed no mercy."

11. Now how this judgment will take place it is not easy to gather from the statements of the Holy Scriptures. For it is expressed in many ways, though it will take

Luke xiii. 25-27. place in one. For at one time the Lord says that He will shut the door against those whom He does not receive into His kingdom, and when they cry out and say "Open unto us, we have eaten and drunk in Thy name," and other things which they are represented as saying, He will answer, "I know you not, ye that work iniquity." At

Luke xix. 27. another time He relates that He will command that those which would not that He should reign over them be brought to Him, and be slain before Him. At another

Matt. xxv. 31-46. time He says that He will come with His angels in His glory, that there may be gathered before Him all nations, and that He may divide them, and place some on the right hand, and, commemorating their good works, carry them into life eternal; and others on the left hand, and charging them with their barrenness of good works may condemn them to suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

Luke xix. 22-24. At another time he commands the wicked and slothful servant who neglected to lay out His money, or even the

Matt. xxii. 11-13. man found in the feast not having a wedding garment, to be bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness. At

Matt. xxv. 10-12. another time he receives the five wise virgins, and shuts the door against the other five who were foolish. These things, and others which I cannot call to mind at present, are said about the future judgment, which is to be ad-

ministered certainly not on one, nor even five, but on many persons. For if there had been one only who was ordered to be cast out from the feast into darkness because he had not on a wedding garment, he would not have immediately added, "for many are called but few are chosen": whereas it would rather have seemed [from the parable] that one was cast forth and condemned and many remained in the house. But it would take too long to discuss all this subject satisfactorily at the present time. But this I may say briefly, without prejudice (to use a common business expression) to a fuller discussion hereafter, that some one kind of judgment, inscrutable to us, preserving however a distinction of merits both in rewards and punishments, is described in Holy Scripture in many ways. But this is enough to say for the purpose of our present inquiry; had Pelagius said that all sinners absolutely are to be punished with eternal fire and eternal punishment, then every one who had approved of that opinion would have first of all passed sentence upon himself. For who will boast that he is free from sins! But because he said neither *all* nor *some*, but made his statement quite indefinite, and in his answer maintained that he said it *in accordance with the Gospel*; the opinion which the bishops confirmed by their decision is certainly true, but it is not clear what opinion Pelagius still holds, and it is not perverse to inquire, even though this decision was made by bishops.

12. A further objection was made against Pelagius for having, as it seemed, written in his book that *evil does not even come into the thought.* But he answered, *We did not so express it, but we said that a Christian should take*

care not to think evil. And this statement the bishops rightly approved. For who doubts that evil ought not to be thought? And if we read what Pelagius does really say in his book that *evil is not thought*, as if it were *evil is not to be thought*, this means, according to the ordinary use of language, that evil ought not even to be thought. For the man who denies this implies that evil ought to be thought. But if this were true, it would not be said in praise of love "thinketh no evil." But we cannot equally approve of the assertion that *evil does not come into the thought of righteous and holy men*, for the word *thought* is commonly used when something comes into the mind, even though it is not followed by consent. But the thought which contracts fault, and is rightly forbidden, has consent. But it is possible that they read a corrupt text, who thought it right to raise an objection to the supposed statement of Pelagius that *evil does not come into the thought*, that is, that what is evil does not come into the mind of righteous and holy people. Such an opinion is certainly most absurd; for when we blame evil we cannot express ourselves without thinking of the evil we blame, but by *thinking evil* we usually mean, as I said, that thought which draws after it consent, and is therefore a fault.

13. When the judges had approved of this answer of Pelagius also, another statement made in his book was read out, that *the kingdom of Heaven was promised even in the Old Covenant.** To this he replied, *This too can*

* Here and throughout "Covenant" is adopted as the translation of Testamentum which, like διαθήκη, is made in the N. T. to have the two meanings of Covenant and Testament.

be proved by Scripture, though heretics deny it to the injury of the Old Covenant; but I had the authority of Scripture on my side, when I made the statement, because it is written in the prophet Daniel, "and the saints shall take the kingdom of the Most High." When they had heard his reply the Synod said, "*This also is not contrary to the faith of the Church.*" Dan. vii. 18.

14. Were our brethren then needlessly vexed with this statement of Pelagius so as to make it one of their objections? Certainly not. But the expression "Old Covenant" is frequently used in two senses, one on the authority of the Divine Scriptures, the other in accordance with the common use of language. For Paul the Apostle says to the Galatians, "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, have ye not heard the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free-woman, which things are an allegory. For these are the two Covenants; the one which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. Sina is a mountain in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is; for she is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is our mother." Since, then, the Old Covenant belongs to bondage, and he goes on to say of it, "Cast out the bond-woman and her son, for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac," but the kingdom of heaven belongs to liberty, how can the kingdom of heaven belong to the Old Covenant? But, since, as I said before, by the common use of language we give the name of the Old Covenant to all the Scriptures of the Law and the Prophets, which were delivered to men before the Incarnation of our Lord, and are contained in the authoritative canon; who Gal. iv. 21-26

is so little acquainted with ecclesiastical literature as not to know that the kingdom of heaven may have been promised in those Scriptures, as also that New Covenant to which the kingdom of heaven belongs? For it is certainly most clearly written in those books: "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will complete a New Covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Jacob, not according to the Covenant that I ordained to their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt." Now this happened on Mount Sinai. But at that time the prophet Daniel was not living to say, "The saints shall take the kingdom of the Most High." For in these words he was prophesying the reward not of the Old but of the New Covenant, just as the same prophets foretold the coming of Christ Himself, by Whose blood the New Covenant itself was dedicated. Of this Covenant the Apostles were made the ministers, as the blessed Paul says, "Who also had made us able ministers of the New Covenant, not in the letter, but in the Spirit. For the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." But in that Covenant which is rightly called Old, and was given on Mount Sinai, there is nothing quite clearly promised except earthly happiness. And hence that land, whither the people was led through the wilderness and brought in, is called the land of promise; and what they were here to enjoy, peace and dominion, the gaining of victories over their enemies, the begetting of many sons, the abundance of the fruits of the earth, and other things of the kind, are promises of the Old Covenant. And though in these are symbolised spiritual things belonging

Jer. xxxi. 31-32.

to the New Covenant, yet he who receives God's law because of those earthly promises, is himself an heir of the Old Covenant. For it is the things which are desired after the old man which are promised and given according to the Old Covenant, but the things which are symbolised therein and belong to the New Covenant require new men as their recipients. For he well knew what the great Apostle said, who tells us that the Covenants were distinguished allegorically by the bond-maid and the free-woman, and assigns the children of the flesh to the Old, the children of the promise to the New. "They which are the children of the flesh," he says, "they are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." The children therefore of the flesh belong to the earthly Jerusalem, which is in bondage with her children; but the children of the promise to the Jerusalem which is above, our free mother eternal in the heavens. Thus we see who belong to the earthly Kingdom and who to the Kingdom of Heaven. Those who by God's grace understood the distinction even at that time were made the children of promise and were in the secret counsel of God counted as heirs of the New Covenant, even though they administered the Old Covenant given by God, in the dispensation of times so as to suit the needs of His old people.

15. Was it not then right that the sons of the promise should be indignant, the sons of the free Jerusalem eternal in the heavens, when that Apostolic and Catholic distinction seemed by Pelagius's words to be taken away, and Agar in a way to be thought equal with Sarah? The

man therefore does wrong, by his heretical impiety, to the Scripture of the Old Covenant, who has the face with sacrilegious impiety to assert that that Covenant is not from the good, the highest, and the true God, such as Marcion, or Manichæus, and any other pest who holds this opinion. Wherefore, to sum up as briefly as possible my opinion on this subject, just as wrong is done to the Old Covenant if it is denied that it is from the good and highest God; so wrong is done to the New if it is put on the same level as the Old. But when Pelagius had answered why it was that he said that the Kingdom of Heaven was promised even in the Old Covenant, and quoted the passage from the prophet Daniel, who prophesied most clearly that the Saints would take the kingdom of the Most High, the bishops were right in deciding that this was not contrary to the Catholic faith. For they were not thinking of that distinction by which the earthly promises given on Mount Sinai are shewn to belong properly to the Old Covenant. Still they were not wrong I say, because they followed that ordinary usage of language, by which all the canonical Scriptures which were delivered to men before the Incarnation of our Lord are regarded as included in the expression *the Old Covenant*. For the Kingdom of the Most High is not a different kingdom from the Kingdom of God, nor will any one dare to maintain that the Kingdom of God is different from the Kingdom of Heaven.

16. The next objection was that Pelagius had written in that same book of his that *man can, if he wishes, be without sin*, and that he had written in a flattering way to a widow and said, *With thee may piety find the home which*

it has found nowhere else! May righteousness, everywhere else a stranger, in thee find its abode! May truth, with which no one now-a-days is acquainted, become thy intimate friend and companion; and may the law of God, which almost all despise, by thee alone be honoured! And again, that he wrote to the same lady, *O happy and blessed art thou, if righteousness, which we should believe to be in Heaven only, is found with thee alone upon the earth!* And that in another book addressed to the same lady, after the prayer of our Lord and Saviour, by way of teaching how saints ought to pray, he said, *He worthily lifts up his hands to God, he pours forth prayer with a good conscience, who can say, "Thou knowest, O Lord, how holy and innocent, and pure from all harm and iniquity and robbery are the hands which I stretch forth unto Thee; how righteous and pure and free from all lying are the lips with which I offer Thee the prayer to have mercy upon me!"* To this Pelagius answered, *We did say that man can indeed be without sin and keep God's commandments, if he wishes, for this power God has given him; but we did not say that there can be found any one who, in any stage of life, from infancy to old age, has never sinned; but that if he turns from sins, he can, by his own labour and the grace of God, be without sin; yet nevertheless he may afterwards turn back again. But the other quotations which follow are not in our books, and we have never said anything of the kind.* When the Synod heard this, they said, *Since you deny that you have written anything of the kind, do you anathematize those who hold such opinions?* Pelagius answered, *I anathematize them as fools, not as heretics; since it is not a matter of doctrine.* Then the bishops passed sentence in these words, *Now since Pelagius has with his own mouth*

anathematized certain vague folly, rightly answering that man with God's help and grace can be without sin, let him answer also to the other sentences.

17. How could the judges in this case, or how ought they to, have condemned unknown and vague statements, when there was no one there on the other side to prove that Pelagius had written those objectionable words which he was said to have written. For it would not have been enough certainly only to have produced a copy and to have read these extracts from his writings, without bringing forward witnesses, in case he should deny that the words, even when so recited, were his own. Nevertheless under the circumstances the judges did what they could, asking Pelagius whether he anathematized those who held opinions of the kind which he declared that he had neither written nor uttered. And when he answered that he anathematized them as fools, what further ought the judges to have required in the matter in the absence of the accusers?

18. But they ought, perhaps, you may think, to have discussed that further point, whether he was right in saying that those who held such opinions ought to be anathematized, not as heretics but as fools, since it was not a matter of doctrine. But the judges were right, under the circumstances, in abstaining from considering the very important question, how a heretic should be defined. For if a person were to say, by way of example, that the young of eagles are held in their parents' talons and exposed to the rays of the sun, and that if they blink, they are allowed to drop on the ground, as though it were proved by the light somehow that they were a

bastard brood; though such an opinion may be false, he who holds it ought not to be deemed a heretic. And even though the opinion is not true, it ought not to be considered foolish, inasmuch as it is found in the writings of learned men, and is a common tradition; and by believing it we neither harm nor help our faith, in that sense of the word by which we are called faithful. But if anyone were to go on to contend, on the ground of this instinct, that birds are possessed of rational souls, because the souls of men transmigrate into them, then, verily, such a view, as a heretical pest, ought to be driven from our hearing and our thoughts, and we ought to strive to show that, even if this opinion about eagles is true, as are many marvellous things about bees which we see with our eyes, yet reason, which is common not to men and animals but to men and angels, differs very widely from such an instinct of irrational animals, marvellous though it be. Certainly there are many other foolish things which are said by ignorant and silly people, who are, nevertheless, not heretics; such as the rash opinions given by men about the occupations of others, which they have not learnt; or the immoderate and blind praise of those whom they love, or the blame of those whom they hate, and whatever else in the ordinary usage of human language, not as a fixed opinion, but now and again as occasion arises, is by thoughtless folly, either uttered with the mouth or committed to pen and paper. And further, many when but slightly reproved for such utterances, readily repent of them, which shows that they did not hold them as a fixed and resolute opinion, but had, if I may say so, snatched them up anywhere and

poured them forth without consideration. It is scarcely
Ecclus. xix. 16. possible to avoid evils of that kind, and who is there who does not slip in speech and offend in word? But it makes a difference how great the offence is and what it is about, and, lastly, whether when reproved he corrects it, or by obstinately defending it, he changes into a fixed doctrine what he had said not as a doctrine, but thoughtlessly. Since, then, every heretic is from that very fact also a fool, but every foolish man ought not therefore to be called a heretic, the judges were right in saying that Pelagius had, *with his own mouth, anathematized vague folly*, because, if it were a heresy, it would undoubtedly be folly. Accordingly, whatever it may be, they called it by the name of a general fault. And they did not think it necessary to discuss at that time whether the statement was made as a doctrine, or with no fixed and resolute judgment, only from a thoughtlessness which might easily be corrected; since, in whatever spirit the words were said, the man whom they were hearing denied that they were his own.

19. However, when we read this defence of Pelagius in the document which we first received, there were present certain holy brethren, who said that they possessed some books of Pelagius written by way of exhortation or consolation to a certain widow, whose name is not given; and they advised that search should be made to see whether perchance the words were there written which he denied to be his. For even they declared that they did not know whether it was so. And then the books were read through from the beginning and the words were sought and found; and those who had shown me the copy, declared that

they had first received the books as the work of Pelagius about four years before, and that they had never heard any doubt expressed that they were his. When we considered, therefore, from our intimate knowledge of the veracity of these servants of God, that they could not lie on this point, there seemed nothing left but to believe that Pelagius rather had lied in the trial by the bishops; except that we thought it possible that even so many years before a work might have been published under his name, which he had not really written. For they did not say that they had received those books from Pelagius, or had heard from himself that they were his. For I, too, have been told by some of our brethren that some works published under my name have found their way into Spain, which were not recognised by those who had read the rest of my works, but yet were believed by others to be mine.

20. That statement, however, which Pelagius did confess to be his still remains obscure, but I think that it will become clear in the subsequent parts of the same proceedings. For he says, *We did say that man can indeed, if he wishes, be without sin, and keep God's commandments, for this power God has given him; but we did not say that there can be found any one who, in any stage of life, from infancy to old age, has never sinned: but that, if he turns from sins, he can by his own labour and the grace of God be without sin; yet nevertheless he may afterwards turn back again.* In these words it is not at all clear what grace of God he means, and certainly the Catholic judges could have understood no other but that which is most of all commended by the teaching of the Apostle, that, namely, by which we hope that we can be freed from the body of this death through

Jesus Christ our Lord, and to obtain which we pray that we may not enter into temptation.

This grace is not nature, but by it our frail and corrupted nature is helped. This grace is not the knowledge of the
Gal. ii. 21. law; but it is that of which the Apostle says, "I will not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ died in vain," and so it is not the letter which killeth but the Spirit Which giveth life. For the knowledge of the law without the grace of the Spirit
Rom. vii. 7, 8. works in man all manner of desire. "For I did not know sin," he says, "except through the law. For I had not known desire, except the law said Thou shalt not desire. But, having taken occasion, sin through the commandment wrought in me all desire." And in so saying he does not
Rom. vii. 12-16. blame the law, nay he even praises it when he says, "The law indeed is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good. Did then that which is good become death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, wrought death in me through that which is good." And again he praises the law, when he says, "For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I work I know not. For not what I would, that do I practise, but what I hate, that I do. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good." You see, now, he knows the law, he praises it, and consents to it, that is, consents that it is good, because what it commands, that he himself too wishes, and what it condemns, that he himself too hates: and, nevertheless, what he hates, that he does. He has in him, then, the knowledge of the holy law, yet this corrupt desire is not healed; he has the good will, and

evil action prevails. Hence it is that while the two laws strive together, while the law in his members wars against the law of his mind, and brings him into captivity to the law of sin, he confesses and cries out, saying, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

21. It is not then nature (which, sold under sin and wounded by corruption, desires a Redeemer and Saviour,) nor the teaching of the law (by which comes the knowledge, not the conquest, of desire) that delivers him from the body of this death; but the grace of the Lord through Jesus Christ our Lord. That grace is not nature which dies, nor the letter which kills, but the Spirit Which giveth life. For he already had nature, together with the choice of the will; for he said, "To will is present with me," but he had not nature with the healing and without the corruption; for he said, "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." He already had the knowledge of the holy law; for he said, "I had not known sin, but by the law," but he had not the strength to do and to perfect righteousness; for he said, "Not what I would, that do I practise; but what I hate, that I do," and "How to perfect that which is good, I find not." Therefore, it is neither the choice of the will, nor the commandment of the law, by which he is freed from the body of this death; because both of these he had already, the one in nature, the other in the teaching; but he asked for the help of God's grace through Jesus Christ our Lord.

22. And so it was this grace, which the bishops knew to

be very well known in the Catholic Church, that they believed Pelagius was acknowledging, when they heard him say that *if a man turns from sins he can, by his own labour and the grace of God, be without sin.* But I, nevertheless, and very many of the brethren, still feel great anxiety about this statement of Pelagius. I, because of a certain book of his, they, because of his disputations which they say they know very well. The book I refer to was one which was given to me for refutation by certain servants of God, who were his disciples and declared it to be his, though they entertained great affection for him. In this book this question was proposed for discussion, because he had already offended very many under the impression that he was speaking against the grace of God. And he said most plainly that by the grace of God he meant that *our nature received, when it was created, the power of not sinning, because it was created with free choice.* We feel anxious, I say, lest some hidden meaning underlie the ambiguity of that language, and he may afterwards explain to his disciples that he said this without prejudicing his doctrine, discoursing in this sort of way: *I did indeed say that man could be without sin by his own labour and the grace of God; but what grace I mean you know very well and can call to mind by reading my works, that grace, namely, in which we were created by God with free choice.* And so the bishops, believing that he meant not the grace by which we were created men, but that by which we were adopted so as to become the new creature (for this is the grace which the Divine Scripture most obviously commends), not knowing that he was a heretic, acquitted him as Catholic. And I feel suspicious also about that very clear statement

Gal. vi. 13.

which Pelagius made in the same book which I answered, namely, that *righteous Abel never sinned at all;* whereas he says now, *But we did not say that there can be found any one who, in any stage of life from infancy to old age, has never sinned; but if he turns from sin, he can by his own labour and the grace of God be without sin.* He certainly did not say that righteous Abel turned from sin and in after life became without sin, but that he never committed any sin. If then that book is his own, certainly it ought to be corrected to agree with his reply. For I should be sorry to say that he has now lied, lest perchance he should say that he has forgotten what he wrote in that book.

Now let us consider the rest. Certainly by what follows in the ecclesiastical proceedings we can show with God's help that even if, as some think, Pelagius was cleared in that examination, and was certainly acquitted by judges who were but human, yet that this heresy, so serious that that we desire it not to make further progress and grow worse, was undoubtedly condemned.

23. The next objections made against Pelagius were certain statements which are selected as found in the teaching of his disciple Coelestius: that *Adam was created mortal and was destined to die, whether he sinned or not:* that *Adam's sin injured himself alone, and not the human race:* that *the Law admits to the Kingdom just as much as the Gospel:* that *before Christ's coming there were men without sin:* that *new-born infants are in the same state that Adam was before the transgression:* that *neither by the death nor the transgression of Adam does the whole human race die, nor by the Resurrection of Christ does the whole human race rise again.* And in the objections made against

these statements it was mentioned that at Carthage they had already been heard and condemned by your Holiness and by other bishops with you. On this occasion it is true I was not, as you remember, present ; but after I had come to Carthage, I went over the minutes carefully, and remember parts of them, but I am not sure whether all these statements are contained therein. But what matters it whether some things should happen not to have been mentioned on that occasion, and therefore not condemned, when it is certain that they are worthy of condemnation ?

Then some other sentences were objected to, reference being made to my name. These had been sent to me from Sicily, when the Catholic brethren of that country were being disturbed by questions of this sort, and I answered them quite satisfactorily, as I thought, in a book addressed to Hilarius, who had sent them to me, to ask my advice. They are: that *man can be without sin, if he wishes:* that *infants, though unbaptized, have eternal life:* that *rich men, though baptized, unless they give up all that they have, whatever good they may seem to have done is not accounted to them, nor can they have the kingdom of God.*

24. To these objections, as the minutes testify, Pelagius thus replied: *As to the possibility of man's being without sin, I have already spoken before; but as to the statement that there were men without sin before the Lord's coming, we, too, say that before Christ's coming certain men lived holy and righteous lives, according to the tradition of the Holy Scriptures. But the rest of the statements, as their own testimony shows, were never made by me, and I am not obliged to give satisfaction concerning them; but, nevertheless,*

for the satisfaction of the Holy Synod, I anathematize those who hold such opinions, or ever have held them. After this reply of Pelagius the Synod said, *As regards these sentences already cited, Pelagius has, in our presence, given good and sufficient satisfaction by anathematizing statements which were not his.* We see, then, and hold that, not only by Pelagius but also by the holy bishops who presided in that court, the most pernicious evils of such a heresy as this were condemned, namely, that *Adam was created mortal,* to which, by way of explaining its meaning, was added, *so that he was destined to die, whether he sinned or not:* that *his sin injured himself alone, and not the human race:* that *the Law admits to the Kingdom, just as much as the Gospel:* that *new-born infants are in the same state that Adam was before the transgression:* that *neither by the death nor the transgression of Adam does the whole human race die, nor by the Resurrection of Christ does the whole human race rise again:* that *infants, though unbaptized, have eternal life:* that *rich men, though baptized, unless they give up all that they have, whatever good they may seem to have done is not accounted to them, nor can they have the kingdom of God.* It is certain that all these opinions were condemned in that ecclesiastical tribunal, by the separate decision* of the bishops and the anathema of Pelagius.

25. Now by such questions and by the contentious assertion of such opinions, which are now hotly discussed in all parts, many weak brethren are disturbed. Wherefore we were compelled by our anxious love, which it behoved us to have through the grace of Christ towards His Church,

* Episcopis interloquentibus. Properly speaking, a judgment on a single point given before the general verdict.

to write even to Marcellinus of blessed memory. For he was daily annoyed by those most troublesome disputants and wrote to ask my advice on certain questions connected with those opinions, and especially about the baptism of infants; and later on also at your request, I discussed this same subject in the church of the Majores,* holding in my hands an Epistle of the most glorious martyr Cyprian, and quoting and commenting upon his words about this matter. And so I laboured hard, with the help of your prayers, that the wicked error might be taken away from the hearts of certain persons, who had been persuaded to believe the opinions which we see condemned in these proceedings. These opinions are what certain of the advocates of such doctrines were trying to persuade some of the brethren to hold; threatening them with the possible condemnation of the Eastern Churches if they refused to accept them. You see that the fourteen bishops of the Eastern Church, in the land where our Lord manifested the presence of His flesh, would not have acquitted Pelagius, unless he had condemned these opinions as contrary to the Catholic faith. Wherefore if he was acquitted just because he anathematized such opinions; then without any doubt these opinions were condemned. This will show itself still more abundantly and clearly in what follows.

* In basilica majorum. What this was is not known.

26. Now therefore let us consider those two statements which Pelagius refused to anathematize, which he even acknowledged to be his, but, to take away what was objectionable in them, explained the sense in which he meant them. He said, *The possibility of man's being without sin I have already spoken of before.* He had spoken

of it certainly, and we remember it; but the assertion was modified (and therefore approved of by the judges) by the addition of the words *by the grace of God*, of which there is no mention in those sentences. But the way in which he replied to the second statement deserves more careful consideration. *But as to the statement*, he says, *that there were men without sin before the Lord's coming, we too say that before Christ's coming certain men lived holy and righteous lives according to the tradition of the Holy Scriptures.* He did not dare to say, *We too say that before Christ's coming there were men without sin.* For this is what had been objected against him from the statements of Coelestius, for he realized how dangerous and harmful such a statement was; but he said, *We too say that before Christ's coming certain men lived holy and righteous lives.* Who would deny this? But this is quite a different thing from having been without sin. For they too were living holy and righteous lives, who nevertheless said with truth "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." And there are many at the present time who live righteous and holy lives, and yet do not lie when they pray, saying, "Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors." The judges therefore were satisfied with the statement in the sense that Pelagius declared that he meant it, not in that in which it was objected to in the assertion of Coelestius. Now let us, to the best of our ability, discuss what follows.

1 John i.8.

27. An objection was made against Pelagius that he said that *the Church here on earth is without spot or wrinkle.* On this point we have had a long conflict with the Donatists also in our Conference. With them we were

rather arguing to show the mixture of evil men, as of chaff with the wheat, from the similitude of the threshing floor. And we might refer to the same similitude in answering the Pelagians, were it not that, perhaps, they wish us to understand by the Church the good only, whom they assert to have no sin at all, so that it may be here on earth without spot or wrinkle. But, if so, I again repeat what I said a little above: How are they members of the Church, of whom true humility exclaims, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us"? Or how will the Church use the petition which the Lord taught her, "Forgive us our debts," if in this life the Church is without spot or wrinkle? Lastly, the Pelagians ought to be questioned about themselves, whether they do, or do not, confess that they have some sins. If they shall say they have not, they should be told that they deceive themselves, and the truth is not in them. But if they shall confess that they have sin, they will be certainly confessing their own spot and wrinkle, and they are not, therefore, members of the Church, since, according to them, she has not spot and wrinkle, and they have.

28. But to this objection Pelagius made a cautious and guarded reply, which the Catholic judges approved of without hesitation. *We certainly said it*, he answered, *but in the sense that the Church is, by "the Washing," purged from all spot and wrinkle, and God wishes it to remain so.* To which the Synod replied, *We, too, agree with this.* For who of us would deny that the sins of all are forgiven in Baptism, and that all the faithful rise from the "Washing of regeneration" without spot and wrinkle?

Or what Catholic Christian does not agree with our Lord's intention, which is to be realized in the future, that the Church should remain without spot and wrinkle? Since we make it our special object, by God's mercy and truth, to bring the holy Church to that perfection, in which it will remain for ever without spot and wrinkle. But between the Washing, in which all past spots and wrinkles are taken away, and the Kingdom, in which the Church will continually remain without spot and wrinkle, is this present intermediate time of prayer, in which it is necessary to say, "Forgive us our debts." On this account objection was made to their saying that the Church here on earth is without spot and wrinkle; for the objectors doubted whether they were not, by so saying, daring to forbid prayer, by which the Church already baptized asks pardon for her sins day and night. Concerning this intermediate time between the remission of sins, which takes place in the Washing, and the continuance without sin, which is to take place in the Kingdom, there was no discussion with Pelagius and no declaration made by the bishops. All that was said was that he thought it ought to be briefly intimated that he had not used the words in the sense implied by the charge. For when he said *We certainly did say it, but not in such a sense*, he obviously meant to imply that he had not said it in the sense supposed by those who raised the objection. But it is clear enough, I think, what the judges were thinking of, which made them say that they agreed with Pelagius, namely, Baptism by which the Church has her sins washed away, and the Kingdom in which now purified she will remain holy without sin.

29. Objections were then made to several things in Coelestius's book, a general summary of the several chapters being given rather than the exact words. These Coelestius had elaborated at much greater length, but those who handed in the indictment said that they could not quote all that he had said. They said, then, that in the first chapter of Coelestius's book it was thus written: *We do more than is commanded in the law and the Gospel.* To this Pelagius replied, *They have quoted this as though it were a statement of our own opinion; but we said it, in accordance with the Apostle Paul, of the virgin life, of* 1 Cor. vii. 25 *which, he says,* "*I have no commandment of the Lord.*" The Synod said: *This, too, the Church accepts.* I have read in what sense Coelestius made that statement in his book, supposing, that is, that he does not deny that the book is his own. For he said this to persuade his readers, namely, that we have by our natural free choice so great a power of not sinning that we do more even than has been commanded; since perpetual virginity is preserved by many, though it is not commanded; while to be without sin it is enough to fulfil the commandments. But the answer of Pelagius, which gained the Judges' approval, was not understood by them as meaning that they necessarily keep all the Commandments of the Law and the Gospel, who moreover maintain their virginity, which is not commanded. But they understood it in this sense, that virginity which is not commanded is something more than conjugal chastity which is; and that it is something more to observe the former than the latter; whereas neither of them are possible without God's grace. Since 1 Cor. vii. 7. the Apostle says in speaking of this subject, "I would that

all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that." And our Lord Himself, when His disciples said to Him, "If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to be given in marriage"† (or as it would be more accurately rendered "it is not good to marry"*) answered "All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given." This then the bishops declared that the holy church accepted, that perpetual virginity, which is not commanded, is more than nuptial chastity, which is. But the judges did not know in what sense Pelagius or Coelestius made the statement.

† nubere.

* ducere.

Matt. xix. 10, 11.

30. After that they objected against Pelagius some other sentences of Coelestius which were pernicious * and doubtless worthy of condemnation; and had not Pelagius anathematized them, he, as well as the sentences objected to, would certainly have been condemned. They said that in the third chapter Coelestius had written that *the grace and help of God are not given for separate actions, but consist in free choice, or in the law and the teaching.* And again that *the grace of God is given according to our merits; because, if He gives it to sinners, He seems to be unjust;* and that he went on to infer *therefore even grace itself depends upon my will, whether I am worthy or unworthy. For if we do all things by grace, when we are overcome by sin, it is not we who are overcome, but the grace of God, which wished to help us in every way and could not.* And again he says: *If it is by God's grace, when we overcome sins, then He is to blame when we are overcome by sin; because He either could not, or would not, entirely protect us.* To this Pelagius replied: *Whether these are the words of Coelestius*

* capitula capitalia.

let those see who say that they are; but I never so held, and I anathematize him who holds them. The Synod says: *The holy Synod accepts you thus condemning this objectionable language.* Certainly, on all these statements, there can be no doubt about the answer of Pelagius who anathematized them, and the most unqualified decision of the judges who condemned them. Whether they were, or are still, the opinions of Pelagius, or Coelestius, or both, or neither of them, or of others either with them or writing in their name, may be doubtful or unknown; yet it was sufficiently declared by this decision that they were condemned, and that Pelagius would have been condemned as well, unless he had also condemned them. Now certainly after this decision, when we argue against opinions of this kind, we are arguing against a heresy which has been condemned.

31. What I am going to say gives me greater pleasure. Before this I was afraid that, when Pelagius said that
¶ 16. *by the help of God's grace man can be without sin*, he might, perhaps, mean by that grace *the power of nature created by God with free choice*, as it is stated in that book, which I received as his and which I answered; and that so Pelagius was deceiving the judges in their ignorance. But now, when he anathematizes those who say that *the grace and help of God are not given for separate actions, but consist in free choice, or in the law and the teaching*, he shows clearly enough that he meant that grace which is preached in the Church of Christ, and is given by the ministration of the Holy Spirit, to help us in separate actions; on which account we are constantly praying for help in time of need, not to be brought into temptation. Nor am I any longer afraid that when he said that *a*

man cannot be without sin, unless he has the knowledge of the law, and explained his words in such a way as to make the help towards attaining sinlessness lie in the knowledge of the law, he meant, perchance, that knowledge of the law to constitute God's grace. You see he anathematizes those who hold this opinion; you see he means us to understand by the grace which helps us in separate actions neither our natural free choice, nor the law and the teaching. What, then, remains but that he must mean that grace which the Apostle says is given by the ministration of the Holy Spirit? the grace of which the Lord says, "Take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father Which speaketh in you." And again it is no longer to be feared, that when he said *all are governed by their own will* and explained that *he said thus because of free choice which God helps when it chooses good*, he may possibly even here have meant that God helps by the natural free choice and by the teaching of the law. For, since he has, as he ought, anathematized those who say that *the grace and help of God are not given for separate actions, but consist in free choice or in the law and the teaching*; then obviously the grace or help of God is given for separate actions apart from free choice, or the law and the teaching. And so we are governed by God in separate actions, when we do rightly; nor do we pray without reason and say, "Order my steps according to Thy word, that wickedness may not have dominion over me."

§ 2

Matt. x. 19, 20.

§ 5.

32. But what follows this again makes me anxious. For

when objection was made against Pelagius, in treating of the fifth book of Coelestius's work, that *they declare that some one man can have all virtues and graces, and take away the diversity of graces which the Apostle teaches,* Pelagius answered, *We did say it, but they have shown malice and ignorance in blaming us. For we do not take away the diversity of graces; but we say that God gives to him who has become worthy of receiving them all graces, just as He gave them to the Apostle Paul.* To this the Synod replied: *The opinion you have expressed concerning the gift of graces which are mentioned by the Apostle Paul is reasonable, and agrees with that of the Church.* Here some one will say "Why then feel anxious? Will you deny that the Apostle had all virtues and graces?" Certainly, if by *all* are meant all those which S. Paul himself has enumerated in one particular passage. I do not hesitate to say that the Apostle Paul had them. And these, I imagine, the Bishops supposed that Pelagius meant, and therefore approved of his statement and declared it to be uttered in agreement with the opinion of the Church. For S. Paul

1 Cor. xii. 28 says, "And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." What then? Shall we say that the Apostle Paul had not all these? Who would dare to say this? For, from the very fact that he was an apostle, he had at any rate the apostleship. But he had also prophecy. Is

1 Tim. iv. 1. not this which he wrote a prophecy, "For the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils"? He was himself also a teacher of

the Gentiles in faith and truth. And he wrought miracles and healings; for he shook off the viper that bit him from his hand and it remained unhurt, and at his word the paralytic at once regained his health and rose up. It is not clear what the Apostle means by "helps," since the meaning of this word is very wide; yet who could say that he had not this grace also, when the help he gave to the salvation of men by his labour is so well known? What indeed can be more renowned than his government, when through him God then governed so many Churches, and through the influence of his epistles governs them still? And what diversities of tongues could he not have had, when he says himself, "I thank God that I speak with the tongues of you all"? Because therefore we must believe that S. Paul had every one of these, the judges approved the answer of Pelagius, when he said that *all graces were given him*. But there are also other graces which are not here enumerated. And though the Apostle Paul was a very superior member of Christ's Body, yet we must not suppose that no more nor fuller graces were received by the Head itself of the whole Body, whether in the flesh or in the soul of man, which being His own creation the Word of God took up into the unity of His Person, that He might become our Head, and we His Body. And certainly, if single individuals could be possessed of all, it would seem to no purpose that the similitude taken from the members of our body was given us to describe the thing we are discussing. For there are certain things common to all members, such as health and life; but there are other things which belong specially to each, so that neither does the ear perceive colours, nor the eye sounds, wherefore it is said, "If the

1 Cor. xiv. 18

1 Cor. xii. 17

whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?" And this is not said as though it were impossible for God to give even to ears the sense of seeing, and to eyes the sense of hearing. But it is quite certain what God does in the Body of Christ, which is the Church, and what diversity in the churches* the Apostle signified by the comparison of the divers members which were to have each its proper gift. Wherefore we now see clearly why those who made that objection did not wish the distinction of graces to be done away with, and why also the bishops were able to approve of the answer of Pelagius, because in the Apostle Paul we recognize all the gifts which he has enumerated in a special passage.

* ecclesiarum. Benedictine editors conjecture gratiarum.

33. What then is it which, as I said before, made me anxious about this sentence? It was these words of Pelagius that *God gives to him who has become worthy of receiving them all graces, just as He gave them to the Apostle Paul.* I should not have been anxious about his answer except as affecting this present matter, which must of necessity be our greatest concern, lest, I mean, while we are silent and ignore so great an evil, the grace of God be assailed. Since then he does not say that *God gives them to whom He wills*, but *God gives to him who has become worthy of receiving them all graces;* I could not help feeling suspicious when I read the words. Surely the very name *grace*, as well as the meaning of the name, is taken away, if it is not given *gratis*, but is received by him who is worthy. Will any one say perchance that I am wronging the Apostle, because I say that he was not worthy of grace? Nay rather I should both

wrong him and punish myself, if I believed not what he says himself. Did he not define grace in such a way as to show that it was called grace because it was given *gratis*? For he said himself: "And if by grace, then is it no more from works; otherwise grace is no more grace." And he said also on the same subject, "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." Whoever therefore is worthy to him it is a debt: but if it is a debt, it is not grace; since grace is given, a debt is paid. Grace then is given to the unworthy, that when worthy a debt may be paid to them; but it is He, Who when they were unworthy gave them what they had not, Who causes them when worthy to have whatever he will pay to them.

Rom. xi. 6.

Rom. iv. 4.

34. This he will say perchance: *I said that the Apostle was worthy, not from works but from faith, of having such wondrous graces given him; for it was not his works, for he had no good works before, but his faith which merited this.* What then? Do we suppose that faith does not work? Nay, that must work most truly which worketh through love. For however much men may talk of the works of unbelievers, we know the true and undeniable declaration of the same Apostle, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." But the reason why he often says that righteousness is accounted to us not of works but of faith, whereas rather faith works through love, is to prevent any one thinking that we arrive at faith itself by the merits of works, when faith is itself the origin from which good works begin; for, as it is said, "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Hence it is said to the Church in the Song of Songs, "Thou shalt come, and pass over from the beginning of

Gal. v. 6.

Rom. xiv. 23

Cant. iv. 8. Cf. LXX.

faith." Wherefore, although faith obtains the grace of working well, yet faith itself we have not merited by any faith; but the mercy of the Lord has prevented us in giving it to us, that thereby we may follow Him. Have we given it to ourselves, and made ourselves faithful? Nay, here again, I will cry out, "It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves." And this exactly agrees with
Rom. xii. 3. the teaching of the Apostle, when he says: "For I say through the grace of God given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."
1 Cor. iv. 7. To the same purport is also that other passage, "For what hast thou that thou didst not receive"? Since we have received even the source from which begins whatever good we have in our actions.

2 Tim. iv. 7, 8 35. 'What then mean the words of the same Apostle, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there remains for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall pay me at that day," if such things are not paid to the worthy, and given to the unworthy?' He who says this does not sufficiently consider that the crown could not have been paid to him when worthy, unless grace had been given him when unworthy. For he says, "I have fought
1 Cor. xv. 57 a good fight:" but the same writer says himself, "Thanks be to God Which hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." He says, "I have finished my course,"
Rom. ix. 16. but he says himself "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." He says, "I
2 Tim. i. 12. have kept the faith;" but he says himself, "For I know

Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep my deposit against that day," that is, "my trust." For some manuscripts do not read "deposit,*" but "trust†" which is easier to understand. For what do we entrust to God, except what we pray Him to keep, among which is even our faith itself? For in behalf of the Apostle Peter* what else did the Lord entrust (in the prayer of which he says to him, "I have prayed for thee, Peter, that thy faith fail not"), but that God would preserve His faith, lest he should fail by yielding to temptation? Wherefore, O blessed Paul, great Preacher of grace, let me speak and fear not—for who would be less angry with me for saying that, than thou, who saidest it for us to say, and taughtest it for us to teach—let me speak, let me say it and fear not: *thy merits are paid indeed their crown, but thy merits are the gifts of God.*

* depositum
† commendatum.

* de Apostolo Petro suggested by Benedictine editors. MSS. have Apostolo Petro.

36. The reward therefore is paid as a debt to the Apostle when worthy: but not as a debt did grace give him the apostleship itself when unworthy. Shall I repent of having said this? God forbid. For by Paul's own testimony I shall be defended from any imputation on this score, nor will any one call me over-bold, unless he has been bold enough first to call him a liar. He himself calls out and he himself testifies that he may commend the gifts of God within him and boast, not in himself but in the Lord. He says not only that he had no good merits to become an apostle, but even that his merits were bad, that he may manifest and preach the grace of God. "I am not meet,"* he says, "to be called an apostle," which certainly means "I am not worthy,"* for this is actually read in several Latin texts. This state-

* idoneus. 1 Cor. xv. 9.
* dignus.

ment is just what we are looking for. For in that gift of apostleship all those graces were contained. For it was not fitting nor meet that an Apostle should not have prophecy, or not be a teacher, or not be conspicuous for miracles and gifts of healings, or not give help, or not govern Churches, or not excel in different kinds of tongues. For all these are comprised in the one name of apostleship. Let us consult Paul himself, or rather let us listen to what he says; let us say to him, "Holy Apostle Paul, the monk Pelagius says that thou wast worthy to receive all the graces of thine apostleship; what dost thou say thyself?" "I am not worthy," he says, "to be called an apostle." And so to do honour to Paul, shall I presume to believe what Pelagius says about him, rather than Paul himself? I will not; for I should be doing what is *onerous** to myself, rather than an *honour** to him. Let us hear then why he is not worthy to be called an apostle: "Because," he says, "I persecuted the Church of God." If we followed our natural feelings,* who would not think that he ought to have been condemned by Christ rather than called? Who would so love the preacher as not to hate the persecutor? He himself therefore says truly and most rightly, "I am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God." "When you were doing such great evil, whence did you merit such great good?" Let all nations listen to his answer: "But by the grace of God I am what I am." Is grace here commended on any other grounds, except because it was given to him when unworthy of it? "And His grace," he says, "in me was not in vain." He teaches this to others also that he may show the choice of will, when he says, "Now

* In Latin there is a play on the words onerabo and honorabo.

* Si sensum sequeremur.

we exhort you and beseech you, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." And by what follows he proves that God's grace in him was not in vain. "But I laboured more than they all." This shows that he did not labour in order to receive grace, but received it in order that he might labour; and so from the same source from which he was made worthy to receive rewards as a debt, he received grace freely when unworthy. And yet even that very labour he did not presume to claim as his own. For immediately after saying "I laboured more than they all," he went on to say "Not I, but the grace of God which was with me." O great teacher, confessor, preacher, of grace! what means this, "I laboured more, not I"? Where will extolled itself a little, then piety was at once on the watch, and humility trembled, because weakness recognized itself. 2 Cor vi. 1.

37. It was natural that, as the minutes show, the holy John, Bishop of the Church of Jerusalem, should have made use of this same quotation, as he told our fellow-bishops who were present in the trial, when they asked what had happened in the proceedings which took place previously under his superintendence. He said, *When some were beginning to mutter and to say that Pelagius said that man could be perfected, that is, as he had said before, could be without sin, without God's grace; I blamed him and argued on this point from the fact that even the Apostle Paul, when labouring abundantly, yet not by his own power but by the grace of God, said: "I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me"; and again: "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God That showeth mercy"; and again:*

"Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it." And we made many other similar quotations, from Holy Scripture. But when they did not receive the quotations which we made from Holy Scripture, but still muttered, Pelagius said: "And I, too, so believe; let him be anathema who says that man can advance to all virtues without God's help."

38. This is what was told by Bishop John in the hearing of Pelagius, who certainly might have said respectfully: *Your holiness is deceived, you have made a slip of memory; I did not say with reference to the quotations which you made from Scripture that I so believed; I do not understand them as implying that God's grace so labours with man, that his not sinning is "not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy."*

39. For there are certain commentaries on Paul's epistle to the Romans, which are said to be the work of Pelagius himself, in which the words "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy," are asserted to be uttered by S. Paul not as his own statement, but as given in the form of a question and in a tone of reproof, as though this were a thing that certainly ought not to be said. So then, when Bishop John plainly regarded this as the Apostle's opinion, and expressly quoted it to prevent Pelagius thinking that any one can be without sin without God's grace, and said that Pelagius had answered, *And I too so believe*; even though Pelagius was present and heard the story, yet he did not answer, *I do not so believe*. Pelagius ought either to deny the authorship of that perverted exposition (in which the writer aimed at showing that this was not the Apostle's

opinion, but that he said it rather by way of reproof), or without hesitation to correct it and amend it. For whatever Bishop John said about our brethren in their absence (whether our fellow-bishops Heros and Lazarus, or the presbyter Orosius, or others whose names are not mentioned in the minutes), I believe that he does not mean it to be understood as said to their prejudice. For had they been present, they might, perhaps, I certainly will not say have convicted him of lying, but have perchance mentioned something which he had perhaps forgotten, or in which he had been misled by the Latin interpreter, not with any intention of deceit, but from the difficulties arising out of a foreign language imperfectly understood. And this was all the more likely as the proceedings were carried on without minutes, a most useful institution to prevent dishonest people lying, and honest people forgetting. But if any one will put a question on this point to our brethren above mentioned, and summon them to an episcopal tribunal, they will do their best to answer for themselves*: but, when even the judges themselves, after the account given by our fellow-bishop, were unwilling to make any declaration on this matter, what is the use of our labouring to do so?

*sibi aderunt

40. Since, therefore, Pelagius, who had been present when those quotations were made, admitted by his silence that he had said that *he so believed*, how is it that when he recollected the passage in the Apostle which occurs just before, and found that S. Paul had said "I am not worthy to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God, but, by the grace of God, I am what I am," he did not see that he should not have

said, when treating of the abundance of graces which the same Apostle received, that he was worthy to receive them. For the Apostle himself not only stated that he was unworthy, but proved it, giving another reason, and by that very statement commended grace as truly grace. But if by chance he could not bring to mind or remember the facts of the holy John's account because they happened so long before, he might have considered
§ 24. his own answer so recently made, and thought of the anathemas he had just pronounced against the sentences quoted against him from Coelestius's work. For among other things objection was made to Coelestius having said that *God's grace is given according to our merits.* If then Pelagius was sincere in anathematizing this, what does he mean by saying that *all graces were given to the Apostle according to merit?* Is there any difference between being worthy to receive and receiving according to merit? and can he show, by any subtlety of argument, that a person is worthy of a thing, but does not deserve it? But Coelestius, or whoever that writer may be, all of whose opinions he anathematized before, does not allow him to put forward misty ambiguities about this word and hide himself behind them. For that writer drives him into a corner and says: *Even grace itself is placed in my power, whether I am worthy or unworthy.* If then Pelagius rightly and sincerely condemned the statement that *grace is given according to merits and to the worthy*, how has he the mind to think, the voice to utter, what he says: *We say that God gives all graces to him who is worthy to receive them?* Who, if he considered carefully those words, would not feel anxious about his answer or his defence?

41. "Why then," says some one, "did the judges approve of this?" I confess that on this point I am myself in difficulty; but most probably they failed, naturally enough, either to catch or to grasp so short an expression, or they may have supposed that his words might somehow have a right interpretation when they seemed to have his clear confessions on this subject, and so did not think it right to raise adverse issues upon a single word. And this might have happened even to ourselves if we had been sitting in that trial. For supposing instead of the word *worthy*, which we actually find, we were to substitute the word *predestined* or something of the kind, there would certainly be nothing objectionable to vex and disturb us. But supposing we were to say that he who is justified by the election of grace is (though certainly not by any antecedent good merits, yet by the fact of predestination) called *worthy*, just as he is called *elect*, it is difficult to decide whether we could, either with perfect accuracy or with some very slight strain on the sense, use such an expression. For, as far as I am personally concerned, I would willingly stop quarrelling over this word, had I not been made anxious about Pelagius's meaning by the book that I answered, in which he admits no other grace of God at all except our nature with free choice, a * grace of creation. I fear, therefore, lest perchance he purposely inserted this word not by carelessness of speech, but as an intentional statement of doctrine.

* gratiam creaturam.

The last statements which afterwards followed made the judges so indignant that they pronounced them worthy of condemnation before Pelagius had replied.

42. For a statement in the sixth chapter of Coelestius's book was objected to, namely, that *men cannot be called sons of God, unless they have been made entirely without sin.* It was said that, if this was the case, not even the Apostle Paul, according to Coelestius, was a son of God, for he said,
Phil. iii. 12. *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.* Again, objection was made to a statement in the seventh chapter that *forgetfulness and ignorance do not come under sin, because they come to pass not by will,*
Ps. xxv. 7. *but by necessity*; whereas David says, "Remember not the offences of my youth and of my ignorance," and
Lev. iv. again in the law sacrifices are offered for ignorance just as they are for sin. In the tenth chapter they objected to the statement that *choice is not free, if it needs God's help, because upon a man's own will depends his power of doing or not doing a particular thing;* and in the twelfth chapter the statement that *our victory comes not from God's help but from free choice.* This point he was said to have argued in these words, *The victory is ours, because by our own will we took up arms; just as, on the contrary, when we are vanquished, the defeat is ours, because by our own will we were too proud to arm ourselves.* And he quoted
2 Pet. i. 4. the words of the Apostle Peter that we are "partakers of the Divine Nature," and he is said to have made the following syllogism: *If the soul cannot be without sin, then God, too, is subject to sin; because a part of Him, namely the soul, is liable to it.* In the thirteenth chapter he says, *Pardon is not given to penitents, according to God's grace and mercy, but according to the merits and labours of those who by penitence have become worthy of mercy.*

43. When these quotations had been recited the holy Synod said: *What does the monk Pelagius here present say to these clauses which have been read? For this is repudiated by the holy Synod and the holy Catholic Church of God.* Pelagius replied, *I again say that these statements were not made by me, as even their own testimony shows; and I am not obliged, as I said, to give satisfaction concerning them; whereas statements which I have acknowledged as mine, these I still hold to be right. But those which I have declared were not mine, I repudiate according to the decision of the Holy Church, anathematizing everyone who contravenes and contradicts the doctrines of the Holy Catholic Church. For I believe in a Trinity of one Substance, and all other doctrines which accord with the teaching of the Holy Catholic Church; but if anyone holds doctrines contrary to her teaching, let him be anathema.*

44. The Synod said, *Now since we have been satisfied with the examination* of the monk Pelagius now before us, who agrees with the godly doctrines, but repudiates and anathematizes what is contrary to the faith of the Church, we acknowledge him as belonging to the communion of the Catholic Church.*

* prosecutionibus.

45. If such is the character of the proceedings in which the friends of Pelagius rejoice that he has been cleared of the charge of heresy, we for our part ought not to rejoice too readily in such an acquittal, which is rather a matter of belief than of clear demonstration: and that though we certainly wish and desire his salvation in Christ; especially as he was anxious enough to prove our friendship towards him by producing our private letters and quoting them in this trial, as we find them inserted in the minutes. And in

thus giving my opinion, I am not accusing the judges of carelessness, or of connivance, or of, what was certainly very far from being the case, any complicity in the impious doctrines. But while I approve and praise their decision as it justly deserves, nevertheless, it does not seem to me that Pelagius has been cleared of heresy, in the opinion of those to whom he is better, and more thoroughly, known. For the judges who were giving their decision about one whom they practically did not know, especially in the absence of those who had handed in the indictment against him, were certainly quite unable to examine the man with greater care; while the heresy itself, if those who defended his perverse doctrine would be guided by their decision, they utterly condemned. But those who are well acquainted with what Pelagius has been in the habit of teaching, whether they have opposed his disputations, or are rejoicing in having been set free from that error, must necessarily suspect him when they read his confession. For it is not a simple condemnation of past errors, but is so couched as to make it seem that he has never thought otherwise than what was approved of in his answer at that tribunal.

46. For to speak of myself especially, at first when Pelagius was absent and was settled at Rome, I heard his name mentioned with great praise. Afterwards, a story began to reach us, that he was disputing against the grace of God. Though this caused me pain and was told me by trustworthy witnesses, yet I desired to know something about the matter either from his own lips or in some book of his, so that if I began to refute him, he might be unable to deny it. But after he came

to Africa, in my absence he landed on our coast, I mean that of Hippo. And there, as I learnt from our people, nothing whatever of this sort was heard uttered by him; for he left sooner than was expected. Afterwards I saw his face at Carthage, once or twice, as far as I can remember, when I was very busy with the cares of the Conference which we were about to hold with the Donatist heretics. But he hurried off over the sea again. Meanwhile, those opinions were eagerly propagated through the mouths of those who were believed to be his disciples. And so Cœlestius was brought before an ecclesiastical tribunal, and received such a sentence as his perversity deserved. Yet we thought it a healthier way of proceeding against them to get their errors themselves refuted and reproved without mentioning their names; we hoped that thus the men might be corrected by the fear of ecclesiastical judgment, rather than actually proceeded against and punished. Therefore we ceased not to argue against those wicked doctrines both in books and public addresses.

47. But after a while I received from the servants of God, the good and honourable men Timasius and James, that book in which Pelagius most expressly brings forward the question of God's grace, as though raised by an adversary and already made the cause of bitter antagonism, and seems most clearly to solve it by maintaining that God's grace is merely nature created with free choice; sometimes joining with it in a feeble and by no means clear way, either the help of the law or even the forgiveness of sins. I then saw distinctly, beyond any doubt, how dangerous to Christian health was the poison of that perversity. But even so I did not insert the name

of Pelagius in the work by which I refuted that book, thinking that I should gain an easier success if I preserved our friendship and still spared his feelings, even though I could not spare his writings. This is why I feel indignant at his saying in this trial in a certain place,
§ 24. *I anathematize those who hold such opinions, or have ever held them.* It would have been quite enough to have said, *who hold such opinions*, so that we might believe that he had corrected his views. But when he added *or have ever held them*, how unjust, in the first place, was it that he should presume to condemn those innocent people who have given up their error which they had learnt from the instruction of himself or others! And, in the second place, who of those who know that he not only once held them, but even taught them, would not naturally suspect that he was insincere in anathematizing those *who hold these opinions*, when he did not hesitate to anathematize in the same way those *who have ever held them*, among whom they will remember that he was himself the master? Now, not to speak of others, how will he look at or face Timasius and James, who were his friends and once his disciples, to whom I wrote the book in which I answered his? Thinking it not right to leave unnoticed the answer I received from them in reply, I have inserted below a copy of their letter.

48. *To their truly blessed lord and right reverend father Bishop Augustine, Timasius and James send greeting in the Lord. The grace of God administered by your words, O blessed lord and right reverend father, has so refreshed and restored us that we may say sincerely, "He sent His word and healed them." Indeed we find that your holiness has so carefully sifted the*

text of that book that we are astounded at the answers given on the several points, whether on statements which a Christian ought to refute, detest, and flee away from, or on those in which Pelagius is not clearly proved to have erred, although he cunningly believed that he could thereby suppress the grace of God. But there is one thing that disappoints us, in spite of this great boon, that this gift of God's grace has so slowly shone out in all its brightness, since it has happened that some have been obliged to leave us who needed for their blindness that illumination of clear truth. To these, though slower than we might have wished, we doubt not of the same grace coming through the kindness of God, Who willeth all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. But we, although we have long ago, instructed by your spirit of love, cast away our subjection to his error, have this further reason for thankfulness that we now have learnt to explain to others what we have already believed, a broad and easy way being opened out to us by the rich discourse of your holiness. And in another hand, *May God's mercy glorify for ever your blessedness, preserving it in safety and keeping it mindful of us!*

49. If then he too were to confess that he had been once in error, as a man already busied with other concerns, but that he now anathematized those who hold such opinions, the man who should not congratulate him, as now holding the way of truth, would be wanting in the bowels of love. But now he was not content to have refused to admit that he has been freed from that pest, but must needs anathematize those who are already freed, and who love him so much as to desire his freedom also. Among them are those who have shown their benevolence towards him by these letters addressed to me, for they

were thinking of him especially when they said that they were disappointed that I was so slow in writing that book, *since it has happened*, they said, *that some have been obliged to leave us, who needed for their blindness that illumination of clear truth. To these, though slower than we might have wished*, they add, *we doubt not of the same grace coming by the kindness of God.* They thought it best still to leave unmentioned the name or names of those referred to, in order that, while friendship lived, the error of their friends might rather die.

50. But now, if Pelagius thinks of God, if he is not ungrateful for the mercy of Him, Who led him to the trial by the bishops, in order that he might not dare afterwards to defend these anathematized doctrines, and might know that they must now be detested and rejected; he will more gratefully receive our letters, when by mentioning his name we prefer to open his wound for healing, than he received those in which, from fear of giving him pain, we are sorry to find that we aggravated his tumour. Now if he was angry with me, let him consider how unjust it was; and, to overcome his anger, let him at length ask for God's grace, which in this trial he confessed was given for our separate actions, that by God's help he may obtain a real victory. For of what advantage to him are the loud praises in the letters of bishops, which he thought fit to mention, nay to read and allege, on his own behalf, as though all who were accustomed to hear his vehement, I might almost say his burning, exhortations to good life, could have easily known that he held these perverse opinions?

51. As far as I am concerned, in the letter of mine

which he brought forward, I not only refrained from praising him, but, as well as I conld without actually raising the question, I advised him to be right-minded concerning God's grace. It is true I called him *lord*, a title we are accustomed to use in letters even when writing to those who are not Christians. Nor are we guilty of falsehood in so doing, since we owe to all a free service, so to speak, to help them to obtain the salvation which is in Christ. I called him *dearly beloved*, and this I still call him, and will call him, even if he is angry with me; since if I do not keep my love for him when he is angry, I shall be injuring myself rather than him. I called him *most desired*, since I was very anxious to have an interview with him, for I had already heard that he was openly striving to contend against the grace by which we are justified, whenever mention was made of this subject. Lastly what I am saying is clear from the short text of this very letter. For I first thanked him for the great pleasure he had given me through his letter, by assuring me of the health of himself and his friends; for surely we ought to wish them the enjoyment of bodily health, even though we wish them corrected of their errors. And a little further on I expressed a hope that he might *be rewarded by the Lord with good things*, meaning not such as belong to bodily health, but rather those which he used to think, or perhaps still thinks, to depend only upon the choice of the will and man's own power, wishing him at the same time, and because of this, eternal life. And after this, because he had in the letter which I was answering praised me, in a kind way and with some profuseness, for having some good gifts of the kind I just mentioned, I here also took

occasion to ask him to pray for me, that I might rather become, by the Lord's help, what he already believed I was. And this I did to remind him that, contrary to his opinions, even righteousness itself, which he thought worthy of praise in me, is *not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.*

This is all which that short letter of mine contains, and it was with that object that I wrote* it. It is as follows :—

* dictata est, *i.e.* dictated to an amanuensis.

52. *To my dearly beloved lord, and much desired brother Pelagius, Augustine sends greeting in the Lord. I thank you very much that you have been pleased to delight me by your letter, and that you assure me of your good health. May God reward you with good things, to make you ever good and insure your eternal life with the eternal God, my well-beloved lord and most desired brother. But, while I do not admit the praises which you laid upon me in your kind letter, yet I cannot but be grateful for the kind spirit you show towards your humble friend; at the same time I recommend that you should rather pray for me, that by the Lord's help I may become what you think I already am.* And in another hand, *Remember us; may you be safe and please the Lord, dearly beloved lord and most desired brother!*

53. And even in this subscription, by desiring that he might *please the Lord*, I showed that this rested on His grace rather than man's will alone, since I did not express it as an exhortation, or a direction, or an instruction, but as a wish. But just as, by expressing it as an exhortation, or a direction, or an instruction, I might have shown that this belongs to free choice, without, however, derogating from God's grace; so, in expressing

it as a will, I commended God's grace, and yet did not do away with the choice of the will. How came he then to bring forward this letter at the trial? For had he from the first held the opinions therein recommended, he would never, perhaps, have been summoned to the episcopal trial by brethren who, though kindly disposed, were nevertheless offended by the perverse character of his disputations. So, then, just as I have given an account of this letter of mine, so too might they have done whose letters he adduced, and have explained either what they thought, or what they did not know, or why they wrote what they did. It matters not, therefore, how much Pelagius boasts of the friendship of holy men, how much he reads letters which sing his praises, how much he produces accounts describing his acquittal from the charge of heresy; if he does not confess and anathematize what he is proved on the authority of competent witnesses to have stated in his books, and then write and argue against these very statements, he will never be believed to have corrected his errors by those who know him well.

54. Now I will mention what has happened since this trial, and has tended rather to increase my suspicion. A letter came into our hands, which was said to be the work of Pelagius himself. He was writing to a friend of his, a certain presbyter, who had kindly written to warn him, as this letter shows, against being the cause of any one separating himself from the body of the Church. Among other things, which are too long and quite unnecessary to insert, Pelagius says, *Our assertion that man can be without sin and easily keep God's commandments if he wishes, was approved by the decision of fourteen bishops.*

This decision, he says, *has utterly confounded the mouth of contradiction, and scattered abroad all the congregation of evil conspirators.* Whether, therefore, Pelagius really wrote that letter, or it was forged by some one or other under his name, who can but see how this error boasts even of the sentence by which it was convicted and condemned, as though of a victory? For he quoted the words referred to in the form in which they occur in that book of his which is called the Book of Sentences, not in that in which they were objected to in the trial, or repeated in his answer. For even those who made the objection, by some carelessness, omitted a word about which there
§ 16. has been no small controversy. For they quoted his words as *man can, if he wishes, be without sin, and keep, if he wishes, God's commandments;* but nothing was said about doing it easily. And afterwards, in his answer, he said, *we did say that man can indeed be without sin, and keep God's commandments if he wishes*, but he, too, did
See §§ 23, 24. not say *easily keep*, but only *keep*. So also in another place, among the things about which Hilarius consulted me and I answered him, objection was made to the statement that *man can be without sin, if he wishes*. And this he answered in these words, *that man can be without sin I have said already before*. Here too, then, the word *easily* was inserted neither by the objectors nor by himself in
§ 37. his reply. And also above in the account given by the holy Bishop John it was thus related, *When they pressed him and said "he is a heretic; for he says that man can, if he wishes, be without sin"; and we interrogated him on this point, he answered, "I did not say that man's nature has received impeccability; but that he who wishes to toil*

and strive for his own salvation has from God this power of not sinning and walking in God's precepts." *Then when some were beginning to mutter and to say that Pelagius said that man could be perfected without God's grace, I blamed him, and argued on this point from the fact that even the Apostle Paul, when labouring abundantly, yet not by his own power, but by the grace of God, said, "I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me,"* and so on, as I have already related.

55. What then is the meaning of their presuming to boast so triumphantly of having persuaded the fourteen bishops who tried their cause, not only of the possibility of not sinning, but also of its easiness, as it is worded in the Book of Sentences written by Pelagius, whereas the word *easily* nowhere occurs in the clause so often objected to and recited at the trial? Surely this word is contrary to the actual defence and answer which Pelagius gave, both when Bishop John stated that the answer which Pelagius gave him was intended to convey the impression that *man can be without sin who wishes to toil and strive for his salvation*, and again when Pelagius himself pleaded and made his defence in the proceedings and said that *man can by his* § 16. *own labour and the grace of God be without sin.* How then does he do it easily if he toils to do it? For I think that all common sense agrees with us in saying that where there is toil, a thing is not done easily. And yet that letter, puffed up with carnal boasting and conceit, flies on its way, and by its speedy flight anticipates the coming of the official minutes, and gets first into men's hands. And in this letter they find it stated that fourteen eastern bishops decided not only that *man can be without sin and keep God's*

commandments, but *can keep them easily*, without any mention of God's help, but only *if he wishes*. And so by leaving out God's grace, for which the battle raged so furiously, there is nothing left to read in that epistle but only unhappy human pride deceiving itself in thinking that it has won the victory. As though John had not said that he had blamed this statement, and had hurled down, with the three thunderbolts, as it were, of Scripture quotations, those mountains of the giants piled up against the overtowering height of heavenly grace. Or as though, indeed, those other bishops, too, who sat in judgment would have endured, or even patiently listened to, Pelagius when he said, *We did say that man can indeed be without sin and keep God's commandments, if he wishes*, unless he had at once added, *for this power God has given him* (for they did not know that he was here referring to nature, not to the grace they knew of in the Apostle's preaching); and unless he had continued, *but we did not say that there can be found any one who, in any stage of life, from infancy to old age, has never sinned; but that, if a man turns from sins, he can, by his own labour and the grace of God, be without sin*. That this was their feeling they showed also by their decision. For they said that he answered rightly that man can, by God's help and grace, be without sin; fearing that, by denying this, they would seem to wrong not man's power, but actually the grace of God itself. And though it was determined that man can, by the help of God's grace, be without sin, it was not defined when he is so. It was not, I mean, defined whether, in this flesh which *lusteth against the spirit*, there has been or is or will be any one, who, while using even now

his reason and choice of will, (either among the crowds of men, or in the solitary abodes of the monks) does not need in this present life to pray "forgive us our debts," not for others only but also for himself; or whether on the other hand this gift will then be perfected when "we shall be like him," when "we shall see Him as He is," when men will not still fighting say, "I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind," but will say in triumph, "O death, where is thy victory? O death where is thy sting?"* And this is a question which should perhaps be discussed not between Catholics and heretics, but among Catholics themselves, without wrangling.

1 John iii. 2.

Rom. vii. 23.

1 Cor. xv. 55.

* So B C ℵ &c.

56. How can any one believe that Pelagius, supposing of course that this letter is his, sincerely acknowledged God's grace (which is neither nature with free choice, nor the knowledge of the law, nor merely the remission of sins, but that grace which is necessary for our separate actions), and sincerely anathematized whoever held contrary opinions; when he did mention in his letter the easiness of not sinning, about which no question was ever raised in this trial, pretending that the judges were actually in favour of this expression, but did not mention God's grace, by acknowledging and inserting which he escaped the punishment of the Church's condemnation?

57. There is also another point which I must not pass over in silence. In the document containing his defence, which he sent me by a certain Charus, a native of Hippo and so a fellow-citizen of mine, though a deacon in the east, he represented one matter very differently from the

account given of it in the minutes of the bishops. But as contained in the minutes it exhibits a much better and firmer and a far more explicit defence of the Catholic truth against the pest of that heresy. For when I read that pamphlet, before I had received the minutes, I was not aware that he had uttered the very words which he did in his defence * at the trial.

* cum sibi adesset. See § 39 note

Now there are a few things in which these accounts do not differ much; about these I do not much care. But I was very indignant, because he might have been supposed from his letter to have reserved for himself the defence of some of the opinions of Coelestius, whereas with the help of the minutes it becomes quite clear that he anathematized them. For some of those opinions he declared were not his, and that he *was not obliged to give satisfaction concerning them;* but he was not willing to anathematize them in that document. The opinions I refer to are these: *That Adam was created mortal, and was destined to die, whether he sinned or not:* that *Adam's sin injured himself alone, and not the human race:* that *the Law admits to the Kingdom just as much as the Gospel:* that *newborn infants are in the same state that Adam was before the transgression:* that *neither by the death nor the transgression of Adam does the whole human race die, nor by the Resurrection of Christ does the whole human race rise again:* that *infants, even though unbaptized, have eternal life:* that *rich men, though baptized, unless they give up all that they have, whatever good they may seem to do is not accounted to them, nor will they have the kingdom of Heaven.* According to that document his answer to these charges was as follows: *All these statements, as their own testimony shows, were never made*

by me, and I am not obliged to give satisfaction concerning them; but according to the minutes Pelagius's answer to these same sentences was, *As their own testimony shows, they were never said by me, and I am not obliged to satisfy my judges concerning them, but nevertheless for the satisfaction of the Holy Synod I anathematize those who hold such opinions, or have ever held them.* Why then was it not also thus written in the document? It would not, I imagine, have involved a great cost of ink, or space, or time, or even of paper itself, to have done this. For who would not think that good care was purposely taken, that that document might pass everywhere current as a short abstract of the minutes? For it would be supposed from this document that he still had full liberty to defend any one of those opinions, as being only alleged against him without being proved to be his, but not that they were anathematized and condemned.

58. He afterwards massed together in the document the many sentences out of the book of Coelestius which have been objected against him: and he did not insert between them, as in the minutes, two answers in which he anathematized those sentences, but included all in a general anathema which he added at the end. I might have supposed that this was done for the sake of brevity, had I not perceived of what great importance it is to the matter which troubles us. For [in his document] he thus concluded: *I again say that these statements were not made by me, as even their own testimony shews, and I am not obliged to give satisfaction concerning them; whereas statements which I have acknowledged as mine, these I still hold to be right. But those which I have declared were not mine,* Cf. § 43.

I repudiate according to the decision of the Holy Church, anathematizing every one who contravenes the doctrines of the Holy and Catholic Church, and in like manner those, too, who, by fabricating falsehoods, have calumniated us. This last sentence is not in the minutes, but has nothing to do with the matter which rightly makes us anxious. Certainly let them be anathema, who, by fabricating falsehoods, have calumniated them. But when I first read the words, *But those which I have declared were not mine I repudiate according to the decision of the Holy Church,* not knowing that the decision of the Church had already been given (as there was no mention of it, and I had not read the minutes) I certainly supposed that he had promised that he would agree with its decision about these sentences, not as one which had been already given, but whenever it should be given; and that he would repudiate not what the Church had already repudiated, but whenever the Church should repudiate them. And I similarly understood the words which followed, *anathematizing everyone who contravenes or contradicts the doctrines of the Holy Catholic Church.* But, in fact, as the minutes show, the decision of the Church about these sentences had already been given by the fourteen bishops; and it was in accordance with this decision that he declared that he repudiated all those opinions, and anathematized those who, by holding them, contravene that decision which the minutes show to have been already given. For the judges had already said, *What does the monk Pelagius here present say to these sentences which have been read? For this is repudiated by the Holy Synod, and the Holy Catholic Church of God.* But those who do not know

this, and read that document, think that some of these sentences may be lawfully defended, under the impression that they have not been decided to be contrary to Catholic doctrine, and thinking that Pelagius said that he was prepared to hold that opinion about them which should be, not which had been already, decided by the Church. He did not then write in that document, about which we are speaking, in such a way as to show what rests on the trustworthy authority of the minutes, namely that all those doctrines, by which that heresy was making its stealthy progress, and that contentious audacity was gaining strength, had been condemned by the ecclesiastical tribunal under the presidency of fourteen bishops. If he was afraid of making these facts known as they really are, it would be better that he should correct himself than be angry with what little watchfulness against heresy I have shown, late though it be. But if it is not true that he was afraid, and being but men we are naturally suspicious, let him pardon us for thinking so; only let him for the future attack the doctrines which were anathematized and repudiated in the proceedings in which he was heard, lest, by sparing them, he should seem not only to have believed them before, but to be believing them still.

59. My object then in writing to your reverence this long book, yet perhaps not too long considering the gravity and importance of the question, was that, if your judgment approved of it, it might be put into the hands of those to whom you thought it would be useful, receiving the weight of your own authority, which is far more influential than my own humble efforts. I hoped that thus I might crush the vain contentions of those who think that

by acquitting Pelagius the eastern bishops who judged the cause approved of those doctrines, which, when they spring up to the great hurt of the Christian faith and the grace of God by which we are called and justified, are always condemned by Christian truth. And they were condemned also by the authority of those fourteen bishops, by which authority Pelagius too would have been condemned, had he not anathematized the doctrines. Now, therefore, having shown him, as was due, the concern prompted by our brotherly love, and having faithfully expressed our anxiety on his account and on his behalf, let us consider the matter as briefly as possible. We shall see that even though he was obviously enough acquitted by a human verdict, yet nevertheless the heresy itself, which is always worthy of condemnation by the judgment of God, was also condemned by the judgment of the fourteen eastern bishops.

60. The last sentence in that judgment is as follows.
§ 44. The Synod said, *Now since we have been satisfied with the examination of the monk Pelagius now before us, who agrees with the godly doctrines but repudiates and anathematizes what is contrary to the faith of the Church, we acknowledge him as belonging to the communion of the Catholic Church.* The holy bishops who sat in judgment comprised in that short sentence two very obvious things about the monk Pelagius; the first that he agreed with the godly doctrines, the second that he repudiated and anathematized what is contrary to the faith of the Church. It was because of these two things that Pelagius was declared to belong to the communion of the Catholic Church. Let us then, by giving a brief recapitulation of the whole matter, see what

words Pelagius used from time to time to make these two points clear to those who, as men, conld only judge at the time from evidence which seemed obviously conclusive. For, in the case of the sentences objected against him, it is said that he repudiated and anathematized doctrines contrary [to the Church's teaching]. Let us then, if we can, briefly sum up the whole case as follows:

61. Since it was necessary that the Apostle Paul's prediction should be fulfilled, "there must be also heresies, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you:" a new heresy, in addition to those of ancient times, has lately been introduced not by bishops, or presbyters, or any clerics at all, but by certain persons professing to be monks. The tendency of this heresy is, under the pretext of defending free choice, to argue against God's grace which we receive through Jesus Christ our Lord, and to endeavour to overturn the firm foundation of the Christian faith, about which it is written, "By one man came death, and by one man came also the resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." It aims further at denying God's help in our actions by saying that, *to enable us to be without sin and to fulfil righteousness, human nature, which was created with free choice, may suffice; and that God's grace consists in the fact that we were so made as to be able to effect these results by our will, and in God having given us the help of His law and commandments, and in His forgiving past sins in those who turn to Him.*" They say that God's grace should be understood to *lie in these things only, not in help given to our separate actions, and that man can be without sin and keep God's commandments easily if he wishes.*

1 Cor. xi. 19.

1 Cor. xv. 21, 22.

62. When this heresy had deceived very many, and was

disturbing the minds of those brethren whom it had not deceived, a certain Coelestius, who held these opinions, was brought to trial before the Church of Carthage, and condemned by a verdict of bishops. Some years after that, Pelagius, who was said to be his master, was charged with the same heresy, and was himself too brought to a
§ 2. trial before bishops. At this trial they recited the whole contents of an indictment which had been handed in against him by Heros and Lazarus, bishops in Gaul, though they were themselves absent, excusing themselves because one of them was ill. Pelagius replied to all these charges, and in consequence of his answers was pronounced free from the perversity of this heresy by fourteen bishops of the province of Palestine, who nevertheless condemned the heresy without the slightest hesitation. For they approved of him because in answer to the objections he
§ 2. replied that *man is helped to be without sin by the knowledge of the law, as it is written, "He gave them the law to help them."* They did not, however, by so saying approve of the view that this knowledge of the law was that grace of God of which it is written, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Nor did they approve of Pelagius saying
§ 5. that *all are governed by their will*, in such a sense as to imply
§ 8. that God did not govern them. For he replied that *he said this because of free choice, which God helps when it chooses good, but man when he sins is himself to blame, as being endowed*
§ 9. *with free choice.* They approved also his saying that *the wicked and sinners are not to be spared in the day of judgment, but to be punished with eternal fire;* because he replied that *his statement was made in accordance with the Gospel, in which*

it is written, "These shall go into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." For he had not said that all sinners were liable to everlasting punishment, so that he could rightly be supposed to have contradicted the Apostle, who says that some will be saved, "yet so as by fire." His statement that *the kingdom of Heaven was promised even in the Old Covenant* they approved, because he quoted the passage from the prophet Daniel in which it is said, "And the saints shall take the kingdom of the Most High," understanding that in this statement of his Pelagius meant by the Old Covenant not only the Covenant that was made on Mount Sinai, but the whole of the canonical Scriptures which were delivered to men before the advent of Our Lord. The statement that *man can be without sin if he wishes* was not approved of in the sense in which Pelagius seems to have made it in his book, as though it rested only in man's power through free choice (which was argued to have been his meaning by his saying *if he wishes*), but in the sense that he implied in his answer at that time, or, as the judges expressed it more briefly and clearly in their decision,* that *man with the help and grace of God can be without sin.* It was not however defined when the saints will attain that perfection, whether in the body of this death or when death shall be swallowed up in victory.

§ 13.

§§ 16, 23.

* interlocutione. See § 24 note.

63. Of the things which Coelestius was declared to have said or written, and which were objected against Pelagius as being the opinions of his disciple, some even he acknowledged as his own sentiments, but said that he meant them in a different sense from that in which they were objected to. Of such a kind is this explanation of Pelagius that *before Christ's coming certain men lived holy and righteous lives,*

§§ 23, 24.

whereas Coelestius was related to have asserted that they *were without sin*. It was also objected that Coelestius had said that *the Church was without spot or wrinkle*. But Pela-
§§ 27, 28. gius answered that *he certainly had said it, but in the sense that the Church is by "the Washing" purged from all spot and*
§ 29. *wrinkle, and God wishes it to remain so*. Another statement of Coelestius was that *we do more than is commanded in the Law and the Gospel*. But Pelagius answered that *he said it of the virgin life, of which Paul says, I have no commandment*
§ 32. *of the Lord*. It was likewise objected that Coelestius *declared that some one man can have all virtues and graces*, and so *took away the diversity of graces, which the Apostle teaches*. But Pelagius answered that *he did not take away the diversity of graces, but said that God gives to him, who has become worthy of receiving them, all graces, just as He gave them to the Apostle Paul*.

64. These four opinions quoted under Coelestius's name, the judges did not approve of in the sense in which Coelestius was said to have held them, but in that which Pelagius implied in his answer. For they saw that being without sin is a different thing from living a holy and righteous life, such as Scripture testifies that some lived even before Christ's coming. And although the Church here is not without spot or wrinkle, nevertheless they saw that by the "Washing of regeneration" it is purged from all spot and wrinkle, and also that God wishes it so to remain. For it actually will so remain, because it is certainly without spot or wrinkle that it will reign in eternal bliss. They saw, too, that perpetual virginity, which is not commanded, is undoubtedly something more than conjugal chastity,

which is; although many preserve their virgin state, who, nevertheless, are not without sin. They saw, too, that the Apostle Paul had all those graces which he enumerates in one passage. And either they may have understood, somehow, the assertion that he was worthy of receiving them, not as according to merits, but rather as according to predestination (for he himself says "I am not worthy," or am not meet "to be called an Apostle"), or the word *worthy* may have escaped their attention, though Pelagius himself must have known how he used it. These are the things in which the bishops declared that Pelagius agreed with the godly doctrine.

65. Now by a second short and careful recapitulation of a similar kind let us see what things they said *he repudiated and anathematized as contrary* [*to the faith of the Church.*] For herein rather the whole of the heresy consists. We may omit, then, what he was said to have written in books of his addressed to some widow or other by way of flattery, because he said they were not in his books, adding that he had never said anything of the sort, and anathematizing those who held such opinions, not as heretics but as fools. And we shall find that such are the other doctrines which he anathematized (doctrines by which the thickets of that heresy are daily growing denser, and threaten alas to become a forest): That *Adam was created mortal and was destined to die, whether he sinned or not:* that *Adam's sin injured himself alone and not the human race:* that *the Law admits to the Kingdom just as much as the Gospel:* that *new-born infants are in the same state that Adam was before the transgression:* that *neither by the death nor the transgression of Adam does the whole human race die, nor by the Resurrection* § 23.

of Christ does the whole human race rise again : that *infants, though unbaptized, have eternal life :* that *rich men, though baptized, unless they give up all that they have, whatever good they may seem to have done is not accounted to them, nor can they*
§ 30. *have the Kingdom of God :* that *the grace and help of God are not given for separate actions, but consist in free choice, and in the Law and the teaching :* that *the grace of God is given according to our merits ; and therefore even grace itself depends upon man's will, whether he becomes worthy or unworthy :*
§ 42. that *men cannot be called sons of God unless they have been made entirely without sin :* that *forgetfulness and ignorance do not come under sin, because they come to pass, not by will, but by necessity :* that *choice is not free if it needs God's help, because every man has his own will to determine whether he does a thing or not :* that *our victory comes not from God's help, but from free choice :* that *it follows from Peter's words, "we are partakers of the Divine nature," that the soul can be without sin just as God is !* For in the eleventh chapter of the book, which has not got the name of its author, but is said to be the work of Coelestius, I have found this view stated thus : *How can anyone,* the author writes, *be said to be a partaker of a thing, if he be defined*
* Statu et virtute. *as entirely without its condition and power.** Therefore the brethren who objected to the statement in question understood him to imply that the soul and God are of the same nature, and that the soul is part of God ; for so they explained his opinion that *the soul is of the same condition and power as God.* And in the last of the sentences objected to it was stated that *pardon is not given to penitents according to God's grace and mercy, but according to the merits and labour of those who, by penitence, have become*

worthy of mercy. All these things, and whatever arguments were added here and there to confirm them, Pelagius denied to be his and anathematized; so the judges approved of him, and therefore they declared that he had condemned what was contrary to the faith of the Church by repudiating and anathematizing it. And, therefore, in whatever sense Coelestius may have asserted them or not, or Pelagius have understood them or not, let us rejoice that such great evils of such a novel heresy as this have been condemned by that ecclesiastical sentence, and let us thank God and praise Him.

66. Now the outrages which are said to have been committed in that place after the trial with incredible audacity by a troop of wicked men reported as taking the very worst side of Pelagius's opinions, so that servants and handmaids of God under the charge of holy Jerome the Presbyter were most wickedly slaughtered, a deacon slain, the monastic buildings set on fire, and himself scarce saved by the mercy of God in some strongly fortified tower from the violence and attack of these wicked men :—all this I think it best to pass over in silence, and to wait till we hear what steps our brethren the bishops think good to take concerning such great crimes. Who would suppose that these criminals will succeed in making the bishops believe their innocence? For impious doctrines of men of this kind ought to be reproved by all Catholics, even by those who live in distant lands, to prevent the possibility of their doing harm in any countries which they may succeed in reaching. But impious actions, being subject to the coercion and discipline of bishops, are best punished with diligence and pious severity at their hands in the country

where they are perpetrated. For it is better that cognizance should be taken of them by those who live on the spot, or at least those at hand. We therefore, who live so far away, must hope that such a decision will be made in this matter in that country, that no further adjudication will be necessary any where else, but that it will be our best interest rather to make it known; that so the minds of all, grievously wounded by the widespread report of those crimes may be healed by the help of God's mercy. And here I must end this book, which I hope, if it shall succeed in approving itself to your judgment, will by God's help be useful to my readers; for your name which has more authority than my own, and your diligence in publishing it, will give it a larger and wider influence.

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